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R I E N Z I

THE LAST OF THE TRIBUNES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“EUGENE ARAM,” “LAST DAYS OF POMPEII,” &c. &c.

Then turn we to her latest Tribune's name,
From her ten thousand tyrants turn to thee,
Redeemer of dark centuries of shame—
The friend of Petrarch—hope of Italy,
Rienzi, last of Romans! While the tree
Of Freedom's wither'd trunk puts forth a leaf
Even for thy tomb a garland let it be—
The Forum's champion and the People's chief—
Her new-born Numa thou!

CHILDE HAROLD, cant. iv. stanza 114.

Amidst the indulgence of enthusiasm and eloquence, Petrarch, Italy, and Europe, were astonished by a revolution, which realized for a moment his most splendid visions.—GIBBON, chap. lxx.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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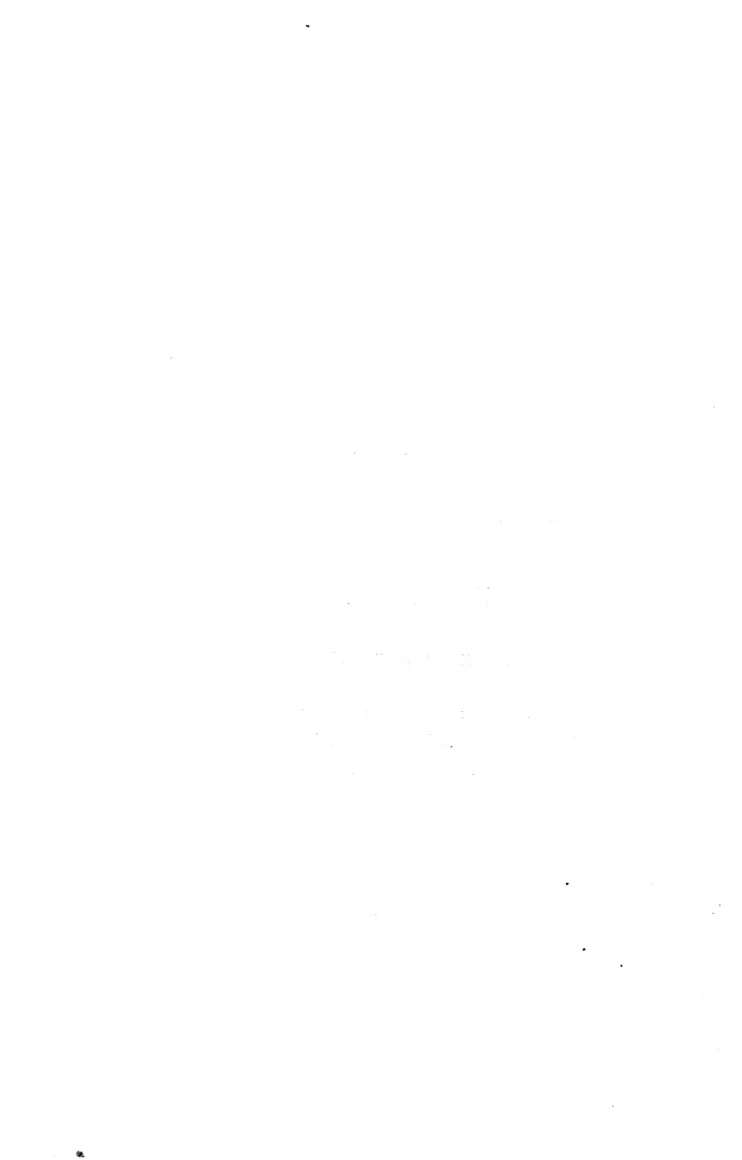
RIENZI,
THE LAST OF THE TRIBUNES.

BOOK VII.

THE PRISON.

Fu rinchiuso in una torre grossa e larga ;—avea libri assai suo Tito Livio, sue storie di Roma, la Bibbia, &c.

Vit. di COLA DI RIENZI, lib. xi. c. xiii.



BOOK VII.

CHAP. I.

AVIGNON—THE TWO PAGES—THE STRANGER BEAUTY.

THERE is this difference between the drama of Shakspeare, and that of almost every other master of the same art; that in the first, the catastrophe is rarely produced by one single cause—one simple and continuous chain of events. Various and complicated agencies work out the final end. Unfettered by the rules of time and place, each time, each place depicted, presents us with its appropriate change of action, or of actors. Sometimes the interest

seems to halt, to turn aside, to bring us un-
awares upon objects hitherto unnoticed, or
upon qualities of the characters, hitherto
hinted at, not developed. But, in reality, the
pause in the action is but to collect, to gather
up, and to grasp, all the varieties of circumstance
that conduce to the Great Result: and the
vulgar art of fiction is only deserted for the
nobler fidelity of history. Whoever seeks to
place before the world the true representation of
a man's life and times, and, enlarging the Dra-
matic into the Epic, extends his narrative over
the vicissitudes of years, will find himself un-
consciously, in this, the imitator of Shakspeare.
New characters, each conducive to the end—
new scenes, each leading to the last, rise before
him as he proceeds, sometimes seeming to the
reader to delay, even while they advance, the
dread catastrophe. The sacrificial procession
sweeps along, swelled by new comers, losing
many that first joined it; before, at last, the
same as a whole, but differing in its components,
the crowd reach the fated bourne of the Altar
and the Victim !

It is five years after the date of the events I have recorded, and my story conveys us to the Papal Court at Avignon—that tranquil seat of power, to which the successors of St. Peter had transplanted the luxury, the pomp, and the vices, of the Imperial city. Secure from the fraud or violence of a powerful and barbarous nobility, the courtiers of the see surrendered themselves to a holiday of delight—their repose was devoted to enjoyment, and Avignon presented, at that day, perhaps the gayest and most voluptuous society of Europe. The elegance of Clement VI. had diffused an air of literary refinement over the sensualities of the spot, and the penetrative spirit of Petrarch still continued to work its way through the councils of faction, and the orgies of debauch.

Innocent VI. had lately succeeded Clement, and whatever his own claims to learning, he at least appreciated knowledge and intellect in others—and the graceful pedantry of the time continued to mix itself with the pursuit of pleasure. The corruption which reigned through the whole place was too confirmed to

yield to the example of Innocent, himself a man of simple habits and exemplary life. Though, like his predecessor, obedient to the policy of France, Innocent possessed a hard and an extended ambition. Deeply concerned for the interests of the Church, he formed the project of confirming and re-establishing her shaken dominion in Italy—and he regarded the tyrants of the various states as the principal obstacles to his ecclesiastical ambition. Nor was this the policy of Innocent VI. alone. With such exceptions as peculiar circumstances necessarily occasioned—the Papal See was upon the whole friendly to the political liberties of Italy. The Republics of the middle ages grew up under the shadow of the Church; and there, as elsewhere, it was found, contrary to a vulgar opinion, that Religion, however prostituted and perverted—served for the general protection of civil freedom—raised the lowly and resisted the oppressor.

At this period, there appeared at Avignon, a lady of singular and matchless beauty. She had come with a slender but well appointed retinue

from Florence, but declared herself of Neapolitan birth; the widow of a noble of the brilliant court of the unfortunate Jane. Her name was Cæsarini. Arrived at a place, where even in the citadel of Christianity, Venus retained her ancient empire, where Love made the prime business of life, and to be beautiful was to be of power; the Signora Cæsarini had scarcely appeared in public before she saw at her feet half the rank and gallantry of Avignon. Her female attendants were beset with bribes and billets; and nightly beneath her lattice was heard the plaintive serenade. She entered largely into the gay dissipations of the town, and her charms shared the celebrity of the hour with the verse of Petrarch. But though she frowned on none, none could claim the monopoly of her smiles. Her fair fame was as yet unblemished; but if any might presume beyond the rest, she seemed to have selected rather from ambition than love, and Giles, the war-like Cardinal D'Albornoz, all powerful at the sacred court, already foreboded the hour of his triumph.

It was late noon, and in the antechamber of the fair Signora waited two of that fraternity of pages, fair and richly clad, which, at that day, furnished the favourite attendants to rank of either sex.

“By my troth,” cried one of these young servitors, pushing from him the dice with which himself and his companion had sought to beguile their leisure, “this is but dull work! and the best part of the day is gone. Our lady s late.”

“And I have donned my new velvet mantle. Daylight will be over before it has its opportunity of admiration!” replied the other, compassionately eyeing his finery.

“Chut Giacomo,” said his comrade yawning; “a truce with thy conceit.—What news abroad, I wonder. Has his Holiness come to his senses yet?”

“His senses, what is he mad then!” quoth Giacomo, in a serious and astonished whisper.

“I think he is; if being Pope, he does not discover that he may at length lay aside mask and hood. ‘Continent Cardinal—lewd Pope,’

is the old motto, you know ; something must be the matter with the good man's brain, if he continue to live like a hermit."

" Oh, I have you ! But faith, his Holiness has proxies eno'. The bishops take care to prevent women, Heaven bless them, going out of fashion ; and his Eminence of Albornoz does not maintain your proverb, touching the Cardinals."

" True, but Giles is a warrior,—a cardinal in the church, but a soldier out of it."

" Will he carry the fort here, think you, Angelo ?"

" Why, fort is female, but—"

" But what ?"

" That brow of the Signora's is made for power, rather than love, fair as it is. She sees in Albornoz the prince, and not the lover. With what a step she sweeps the floor, it disdains even the cloth of gold."

" Hark !" cried Giacomo, hastening to the lattice, " hear you the hoofs below ? Ah, a gallant company !"

" Returned from hawking, a foreign sport,

but a gentle," answered Angelo, regarding wistfully the cavalcade, as it swept the narrow street. "Plumes waving, steeds curvetting—see how yon handsome cavalier presses close to that dame!"

"His mantle is the colour of mine," sighed Giacomo.

As the gay procession paced slowly on, till hidden by the winding street, and as the sound of laughter and the tramp of horses was yet faintly heard, there gloomed right before the straining gaze of the pages, a dark massive tower of the mighty masonry of the eleventh century: the sun gleamed sadly on its vast and dismal surface, which was only here and there relieved by loop-holes and narrow slits, rather than casements. It was a striking contrast to the gaiety around, the glittering shops, and the gaudy train that had just filled the space below. This contrast the young men seemed involuntarily to feel; they drew back, and looked at each other.

"I know your thoughts, Giacomo," said Angelo, the handsomer and elder of the two.

“you think yon tower affords but a gloomy lodgement?”

“And I thank my stars that made me not high enough to require so grand a cage,” rejoined Giacomo.

“Yet,” observed Angelo, “it holds one, who in birth was not our superior.”

“Do tell me something of that strange man,” said Giacomo, regaining his seat; “you are Roman and should know.”

“Yes !” answered Angelo, haughtily drawing himself up. “*I am* Roman ! and I should be unworthy my birth, if I had not already learned what honour is due to the name of Cola di Rienzi.”

“Yet your fellow-Romans nearly stoned him, I fancy,” muttered Giacomo. “Honour seems to lie more in kicks than money. Can you tell me,” continued the page in a louder key—“can you tell me if it be true, that Rienzi appeared at Prague before the Emperor, and prophesied that the late Pope and all the Cardinals should be murdered, and a new Italian Pope elected, who should endue the Emperor

with a golden crown, as Sovereign of Sicilia, Calabria, and Apulia,* and himself with a crown of silver, as king of Rome, and all Italy? And—”

“Hush!” interrupted Angelo, impatiently. “Listen to me, and you shall know the exact story. On *last* leaving Rome (thou knowest that after his fall, he was present at the Jubilee in disguise) the Tribune—” here Angelo, pausing, looked round, and then with a flushed cheek and raised voice resumed, “Yes, the *Tribune*, that *was* and *shall* be—travelled in disguise, as a pilgrim, over mountain and forest, night and day, exposed to rain and storm, no shelter but the cave,—he who had been, they say, the very spoilt one of luxury. Arrived at length in Bohemia, he disclosed himself to a Florentine in Prague, and through his aid obtained audience of the Emperor Charles.”

“A prudent man, the Emperor!” said Giacomo, “close fisted as a miser. He makes conquests by bargain, and goes to market for laurels,—as I have heard my brother say, who was under him.”

* An absurd fable adopted by certain historians.

“ True—but I also have heard that he likes bookmen and scholars—is wise and temperate, and much is yet hoped from him in Italy! Before the Emperor, I say, came Rienzi. ‘ Know great Prince,’ said he, ‘ that I am that Rienzi to whom God gave to govern Rome, in peace, with justice, and to freedom. I curbed the nobles, I purged corruption, I amended law. The powerful persecuted me—pride and envy have chased me from my dominions. Great as you are, fallen as I am, I too have wielded the sceptre and might have worn a crown. Know too, that I am illegitimately of your lineage ; my father the son of Henry VII ;* the blood of the Teuton rolls in my veins ; mean as were my earlier fortunes and humble my earlier name ! From you, O king, I seek protection, and I demand justice.”

“ A bold speech, and one from equal to equal,” said Giacomo ; “ surely you swell us out the words.”

“ Not a whit ; they were written down by the Emperor’s scribe, and every Roman who has

* Uncle to the Emperor Charles.

once heard knows them by heart: once every Roman was the equal to a king, and Rienzi maintained our dignity in asserting his own.”

Giacomo, who discreetly avoided quarrels, knew the weak side of his friend; and though in his heart he thought the Romans as good for nothing a set of turbulent dastards as all Italy might furnish, he merely picked a straw from his mantle, and said in rather an impatient tone, “Humph! proceed! did the Emperor dismiss him?”

“Not so—Charles was struck with his bearing and his spirit, received him graciously, and entertained him hospitably. He remained some time at Prague, and astonished all the learned with his knowledge and eloquence.”*

“But if so honoured at Prague, how comes he a prisoner at Avignon?”

“Giacomo,” said Angelo, thoughtfully, “there

* His Italian cotemporary delights in representing this remarkable man as another Crichton. “Disputava,” he says of him when at Prague, “disputava con Mastri di teologia; molto diceva, parlava cose meravigliose, lingua diserta . . . abbair fea ogni persona.”

are some men whom we of another mind and mould can rarely comprehend and never fathom. And of such men I have observed that a supreme confidence in their own fortune or their own souls, is the most common feature. Thus impressed, and thus buoyed, they rush into danger with a seeming madness, and from danger soar to greatness, or sink to death. So with Rienzi; dissatisfied with empty courtesies and weary of playing the pedant, since once he had played the prince;—some say of his own accord, (though others relate that he was surrendered to the Pope's legate by Charles,) he left the Emperor's court, and without arms, without money, betook himself at once to Avignon!"

"Madness indeed!"

"Yet, perhaps his only course, under all circumstances," resumed the elder page. "Once before his fall, and once during his absence from Rome, he had been excommunicated by the Pope's legate. He was accused of heresy—the ban was still on him. It was necessary that he should clear himself. How was the poor exile to do so? No powerful friend stood

up for the friend of the people. No courtier vindicated one who had trampled on the neck of the nobles. His own genius was his only friend; on that only could he rely. He sought Avignon to free himself from the accusations against him; and, doubtless, he hoped that there was but one step from his acquittal to his restoration. Besides, it is certain that the Emperor had been applied to, formally to surrender Rienzi. He had the choice before him; for to that sooner or later it must come—to go free, or to go in bonds—as a criminal, or as a Roman. He chose the latter. Wherever he passed along, the people rose in every town, in every hamlet. The name of the great Tribune was honoured throughout all Italy. They besought him not to rush into the very den of peril—they implored him to save himself for that country he had sought to raise. ‘I go to vindicate myself, and to triumph,’ was the Tribune’s answer. Solemn honours were paid him in the cities through which he passed; and I am told that never ambassador, prince, or baron, entered Avignon with so long a train as that

which followed into these very walls the path of Cola di Rienzi."

"And on his arrival?"

"He demanded an audience that he might refute the charges against him. He flung down the gage to the proud cardinals who had excommunicated him. He besought a trial."

"And what said the pope?"

"Nothing—by word. Yon tower was his answer!"

"A rough one!"

"But there have been longer roads than that from the prison to the palace, and God made not men like Rienzi for the dungeon and the chain."

As Angelo said this with a loud voice, and with all the enthusiasm with which the fame of the fallen Tribune had inspired the youth of Rome, he heard a sigh behind him. He turned in some confusion, and at the door which admitted to the chamber occupied by the Signora Cæsarini, stood a female of noble presence. Attired in the richest garments, gold and gems were dull to the lustre of her dark eyes, and

as she now stood, erect and commanding, never seemed brow more made for the regal crown—never did human beauty more fully consummate the ideal of a heroine and a queen.

“Pardon me, Signora,” said Angelo, hesitatingly; “I spoke loud, I disturbed you; but I am Roman, and my theme was—”

“Rienzi!” said the lady, approaching; “a fit one to stir a Roman heart. Nay—no excuses—they would sound ill on thy generous lips. Ah, if—” the Signora paused suddenly and sighed again; then in an altered and graver tone she resumed—“If fate restore Rienzi to his proper fortunes, he shall know what thou deemest of him.”

“If you, lady, who are of Naples,” said Angelo, with meaning emphasis, “speak thus of a fallen exile, what must I have felt who acknowledged a sovereign?”

“Rienzi is not of Rome alone—he is of Italy—of the world,” returned the Signora. “And you, Angelo, who have had the boldness to speak thus of one fallen, have proved with what loyalty you can serve those who have the fortune to own you.”

As she spoke, the Signora looked at the Page's downcast and blushing face long and wistfully, with the gaze of one accustomed to read the soul in the countenance.

"Men are often deceived," said she sadly, yet with a half smile; "but women rarely,—save in love. Would that Rome were filled with such as you. Enough! Hark! Is that the sound of hoofs in the court below?"

"Madam," said Giacomo, bringing his mantle gallantly over his shoulder, "I see the servitors of his Eminence the Cardinal D'Albornoz.—It is his Eminence himself."

"It is well!" said the Signora, with a brightening eye. "I await his Eminence!" With these words she withdrew by the door, through which she had surprised the Roman page.

CHAP. II.

THE CHARACTER OF A WARRIOR PRIEST—AN INTERVIEW—THE INTRIGUE AND COUNTER INTRIGUE OF COURTS.

GILES, (or Egidio,) Cardinal D'Albornoz, was one of the most remarkable men of that remarkable time, so prodigal of genius. Boasting his descent from the royal houses of Arragon and Leon, he had early entered the church, and, yet almost a youth, attained the archbishopric of Toledo. But no peaceful career, however brilliant, sufficed to his ambition. He could not content himself with the honours of the church unless they were the honours of a church militant. In the war against the Moors, no Spaniard had more highly distinguished himself, and Alphonso XI. king of Castile, had insisted on receiving from the hand of the martial priest

the badge of knighthood. After the death of Alphonso, who was strongly attached to him, Albornoz repaired to Avignon, and obtained from Clement VI. the cardinal's hat. With Innocent he continued in high favour, and now, constantly in the councils of the Pope, rumours of warlike preparation, under the banners of Albornoz, for the recovery of the papal dominions from the various tyrants that usurped them, were already circulated through the court. Bold, sagacious, enterprising, and cold-hearted,—with the valour of the knight, and the cunning of the priest,—such was the character of Giles, Cardinal D'Albornoz.

Leaving his attendant gentlemen in the anti-chamber, Albornoz was ushered into the apartment of the Signora Cæsarini. In person about the middle height, the dark complexion of Spain had faded, by thought and the wear of ambitious schemes, into a sallow, but hardy hue. His brow was deeply furrowed, and though not yet passed the prime of life, Albornoz might seem to have entered age, but for the firmness of his step, the slender elasticity of his frame, and an eye which had acquired calmness and

depth from thought without losing any of the brilliancy of youth.

“ Beautiful signora,” said the cardinal, bending over the hand of the Cæsarini with a grace which betokened more of the prince than of the priest; “ the commands of his holiness have detained me, I fear, beyond the hour in which you vouchsafed to appoint my homage, but my heart has been with you since we parted.”

“ The Cardinal D’Albornoz,” replied the Signora gently withdrawing her hand, and seating herself, “ has so many demands on his time, from the duties of his rank and renown, that methinks to divert his attention for a few moments to less noble thoughts is a kind of treason to his fame.”

“ Ah, lady,” replied the Cardinal, “ never was my ambition so nobly directed as it is now. And it were a prouder lot to be at thy feet than on the throne of St. Peter.”

A momentary blush passed over the cheek of the Signora, yet it seemed the blush of indignation as much as of vanity; it was succeeded by an extreme paleness. She paused before she

replied, and then fixing her large and haughty eyes on the enamoured Spaniard, she said, in a low voice,

“ My Lord Cardinal, I do not affect to misunderstand your words ; neither do I place them to the account of a general gallantry. I am vain enough to believe you imagine you speak truly when you say you love me.”

“ Imagine !—as well might I imagine I believed in the sanctity of the Cross,” answered the priest.

“ Listen to me,” returned the Signora. “ She whom the Cardinal Albornoz honours with his love has a right to demand of him its proofs. In the papal court, whose power like his?—I require you to exercise it for me.”

“ Speak, dearest lady, have your estates been seized by the barbarians of these lawless times ? Hath any dared to injure you ? Lands and titles, are these thy wish ?—my power is thy slave.”

“ Cardinal, no ! there is one thing dearer to an Italian and a woman, than wealth or station—it is revenge !”

The Cardinal drew back from the flashing eye that was bent upon him, but the spirit of her speech touched a congenial chord.

“There,” said he, after a little hesitation, “there, spake high descent. Revenge is the luxury of the well-born. Let serfs and churls forgive an injury. Proceed, lady.”

“Hast thou heard the last news from Rome?” said the Signora.

“Surely,” replied the Cardinal, in some surprise, “we were poor statesmen to be ignorant of the condition of the capital of the papal dominions. And my heart mourns for that unfortunate city; but wherefore wouldst thou question me of Rome?—thou art—”

“Roman! know, my Lord, that I have a purpose in calling myself of Naples. To your discretion I entrust my secret—I am of Rome! Tell me of her state.”

“Fairest one,” returned the Cardinal, “I should have known that that brow and presence were not of the light *Campania*. My reason should have told me that they bore the stamp of the empress of the world. The state of Rome,”

continued Albornoz, in a graver tone, “is briefly told. Thou knowest that after the fall of the able but insolent Rienzi, Pepin Count of Minorbino, (a creature of Montreal’s,) who had assisted in expelling him, would have betrayed Rome to Montreal,—but he was neither strong enough nor wise enough—and the Barons chased him as he had chased the Tribunes. Some time afterwards a new demagogue, John Cerroni, was installed in the Capitol. He once more expelled the nobles; new revolutions ensued—the Barons were recalled. The weak successor of Rienzi summoned the people to arms—in vain—in terror and despair he abdicated his power, and left the city a prey to the interminable feuds of the Orsini, the Colonna, and the Savelli.”

“Thus much I know, my Lord; but when his Holiness succeeded to the chair of Clement VI.—”

“Then,” said Albornoz—and a slight frown darkened his sallow brow — “then came the blacker part of the history. Two senators were elected in concert by the Pope.”

“ Their names ?”

“ Bertoldo Orsini, and one of the Colonna. A few weeks afterwards, the high price of provisions stung the rascal stomachs of the mob—they rose, they clamoured, they armed, they besieged the Capitol—”

“ Well, well,” cried the Signora, clasping her hands, and betokening in every feature her interest in the narration.

“ Colonna only escaped death by a vile disguise, Bertoldo Orsini was stoned.”

“ Stoned !—there fell one !”

“ Yes, lady, one of a great house ; the least drop of whose blood were worth an ocean of plebeian puddle. At present all is disorder, misrule, anarchy at Rome. The contests of the nobles shake the city to the centre ; and prince and people, wearied of so many experiments to establish a government, have now no governor but the fear of the sword. Such, fair madam, is the state of Rome. Sigh not, it occupies now our care. It shall be remedied, and I, madam, may be the happy instrument of restoring peace to your native city.”

“There is but one way of restoring peace to Rome,” answered the Signora, abruptly, “and that is—The restoration of Rienzi !”

The cardinal started. “Madam,” said he, “do I hear aright—are you not nobly born—can you desire the rise of a plebeian? Did you not speak of revenge, and now you ask for mercy?”

“Lord Cardinal,” said the beautiful Signora, earnestly, “I do not ask for mercy, such a word is not for the lips of one who demands justice. Nobly born I am—ay, and from a stock to whose long descent from the patricians of ancient Rome, the high line of Arragon itself would be of yesterday. Nay, I would not offend your Eminence; your greatness is not borrowed from pedigrees and tombstones—your greatness is your own achieving: would you speak honestly, my Lord, you would own that you are proud only of *your own* laurels, and that, in your heart, you laugh at the stately fools who trick themselves out in the mouldering finery of the dead !”

“Muse! prophetess! you speak aright,” said the high-spirited Cardinal, with unwonted

energy; “and your voice is like that of the Fame I dreamt of in my youth. Speak on, speak ever !”

“Such,” continued the Signora, “such as your pride, is the just pride of Rienzi. Proud that he is the workman of his own great renown. In such as the Tribune of Rome we acknowledge the founders of noble lineage. Ancestry makes not them—they make ancestry. Enough of this. I am of noble race, it is true, but my house, and those of many, have been crushed and broken beneath the yoke of the Orsini and Colonna—it is against them I desire revenge. But I am better than an Italian lady—I am a Roman woman—I weep tears of blood for the disorders of my unhappy country. I mourn, that even you, my Lord,—yes, that a barbarian, however eminent and however great, should mourn for Rome. I desire to restore her fortunes.”

“But Rienzi would only restore his own.”

“Not so, my Lord Cardinal, not so. Vain, ambitious, proud he may be—great souls are so—but he has never had one wish divorced from the welfare of Rome. But put aside all

thought of his interests—it is not of these I speak. You desire to re-establish the papal power in Rome. Your senators have failed to do it. Demagogues fail—Rienzi alone can succeed; he alone can command the turbulent passions of the Barons—he alone can sway the capricious and fickle mob. Release, restore Rienzi, and through Rienzi the Pope regains Rome !”

The Cardinal did not answer for some moments. Buried as in a reverie, he sate motionless, shading his face with his hand. Perhaps he secretly owned there was a wiser policy in the suggestions of the Signora than he cared openly to confess. Lifting his hand, at length, from his bosom, he fixed his eyes upon the Signora’s watchful countenance, and, with a forced smile, said,

“ Pardon me, madam; but while we play the politicians, forget not that I am thy adorer. Sagacious may be thy counsels, yet wherefore are they urged? Why this anxious interest for Rienzi? If by releasing him the church may gain an ally, am I sure that Giles d’Albornoz will not raise a rival ?”

“ My Lord,” said the signora, half rising, “ you are my suitor, but your rank does not tempt me—your gold cannot buy. If you love me, I have a right to command your services to whatsoever task I would require—it is the law of chivalry. If ever I yield to the addresses of mortal lover, it will be to the man who restores to my native land her hero and her saviour.”

“ Fair patriot,” said the Cardinal, “ your words encourage my hope, yet they half damp my ambition, for fain would I desire that love and not service should alone give me the treasure that I ask. But hear me, sweet lady; you over-rate my power, I cannot deliver Rienzi—he is accused of rebellion, he is excommunicated for heresy. His acquittal rests with himself.”

“ You can procure his trial—”

“ Perhaps, lady—”

“ That *is* his acquittal!—and, a private audience of his Holiness !”

“ Doubtless.”

“ *That* is his restoration. Behold all I ask !”

“ And then, sweet Roman, it will be *mine* to ask,” said the Cardinal, passionately, dropping

on his knee, and taking the Signora's hand. For one moment, that proud lady felt that she was woman—she blushed, she trembled; but it was not (could the Cardinal have read that heart) with passion or with weakness; it was with terror and with shame. Passively she surrendered her hand to the Cardinal, who covered it with kisses.

“Thus inspired,” said Alborno, rising, “I will not doubt of success. To-morrow I wait on thee again.”

He pressed her hand to his heart—the lady felt it not. He sighed his farewell—she did not hear it. Lingeringly he gazed; and slowly he departed. But it was some moments, before recalled to herself, the Signora felt that she was alone.

“Alone!” she cried, half-aloud, and with wild emphasis—“alone! Oh, what have I undergone—what have I said! Unfaithful, even in thought, to *him*! Oh, never! never! I, that have felt the kiss of his hallowing lips—that have slept on his kingly heart—I!—holy Mother, befriend and strengthen me!” she continued,

as weeping bitterly, she sunk upon her knees ; and for some moments she was lost in prayer. Then, rising composed, but deadly pale, and with the tears rolling heavily down her cheeks, the Signora passed slowly to the casement ; she threw it open, and leant forward ; the air of the declining day came softly on her temples ; it cooled, it mitigated, the fever that preyed within. Dark and huge before her, frowned in its gloomy shadow, the tower, in which Rienzi lay a prisoner and a criminal, she gazed at it long and wistfully ; and then, turning away, drew from the folds of her robe a small and sharp dagger. “ Let me save him for glory ! ” she murmured ; “ and *this* shall save me from dishonour ! ”

CHAPTER III.

HOLY MEN—SAGACIOUS DELIBERATIONS—JUST RESOLVES—AND SORDID MOTIVES TO ALL.

ENAMOURED of the beauty, and almost equally so of the lofty spirit, of the Signora Cæsarini, as was the warlike Cardinal of Spain, love with him was not so master a passion as that ambition of complete success in all the active designs of life, which had hitherto animated his character, and signalized his career. Musing, as he left the Signora, on her wish for the restoration of the Roman Tribune, his experienced and profound intellect ran swiftly through whatever advantages might result from that restoration to his own political designs. We have already seen that it was the intention of the new pon-

tiff to attempt the recovery of the Patrimonial territories, now torn from him by the gripe of able and disaffected tyrants. With this view, a military force was already in preparation, and the Cardinal was already secretly nominated the chief. But the force was very inadequate to the enterprise; and Albornoz depended much upon the moral strength of the cause in bringing recruits to his standard in his progress through the Italian states. The wonderful rise of Rienzi had excited an extraordinary enthusiasm in his favour through all the free populations of Italy. And this had been yet more kindled and inflamed by the influential eloquence of Petrarch, who, at that time possessed of a power greater than ever wielded, before or since, (not even excepting the Sage of Ferney,) wielded by a single literary man—had put forth his boldest genius in behalf of the Roman Tribune. Such a companion as Rienzi in the camp of the Cardinal might be a magnet of attraction to the youth and enterprise of Italy. On nearing Rome, he might himself judge how far it would be advisable to reinstate Rienzi as a delegate

of the papal power. And, in the meanwhile, the Roman's influence might be serviceable, whether to awe the rebellious nobles, or conciliate the stubborn people. On the other hand, the Cardinal was shrewd enough to perceive that no possible good could arise from Rienzi's present confinement. With every month it excited deeper and more universal sympathy. To his lonely dungeon turned half the hearts of republican Italy. Literature had leagued its new and sudden, and therefore mighty and even disproportioned power, with his cause: and the Pope, without daring to be his judge, incurred the odium of being his jailor. "A popular prisoner," said the sagacious Cardinal to himself, "is the most dangerous of guests. Restore him as your servant, or destroy him as your foe! In this case, I see no alternative, but acquittal or the knife!" In these reflections, that able plotter, deep in the Machiavelism of the age, divorced the lover from the statesman.

Recurring now to the former character, he felt some disagreeable and uneasy forebodings at the

earnest interest of his mistress. Fain would he have attributed either to some phantasy of patriotism, or some purpose of revenge, the anxiety of the Cæsarini ; and there was much in her stern and haughty character which favoured that belief. But he was forced to acknowledge to himself some jealous apprehension of a sinister and latent motive, which touched his vanity and alarmed his love. “ Howbeit,” he thought, as he turned from his unwilling fear, “ I can play with her at her own weapons ; I can obtain the release of Rienzi, and claim my reward. If denied, the hand that opened the dungeon, can again rivet the chain. In her anxiety is my power !”

These thoughts the Cardinal was still revolving in his palace, when he was suddenly summoned to attend the Pontiff.

The pontifical palace no longer exhibited the gorgeous, yet graceful luxury of Clement VI., and the sarcastic Cardinal smiled to himself at the quiet gloom of the antechambers. “ He thinks to set an example—this poor native of Limoges !” thought Albornoz, “ and has

but the mortification of finding himself eclipsed by the poorest bishop. He humbles himself, and fancies that the humility will be contagious."

His Holiness was seated before a small and rude table, bestrewed with papers, his face buried in his hands; the room was simply furnished, and, in a small niche beside the case-ment, was an ivory crucifix; below, the death's head and cross-bones, which most monks then introduced with a purpose similar to that of the ancients by the like ornaments,—mementoes of the shortness of life, and therefore admonitions to make the best of it! On the ground lay a map of the Patrimonial territory, with the fortresses in especial, distinctly and prominently marked. The Pope gently lifted up his head as the Cardinal was announced, and discovered a plain, but sensible and somewhat interesting, countenance. "My son!" said he, with a kindly courtesy, to the lowly salutation of the proud Spaniard, "scarcely wouldst thou imagine, after our long conference this morning, that new cares would so soon demand the assistance of thy counsels.

Verily, the wreath of thorns stings sharp under the triple crown; and I sometimes long for the quiet abode of my old professor's chair in Toulouse: my station is of pain and toil."

"God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," observed the Cardinal with pious and compassionate gravity.

Innocent could scarcely refrain a smile as he replied, "The lamb that carries the cross must have the strength of the lion. Since we parted, my son, I have had painful intelligence; our couriers have arrived from the Campagna—the heathen rage furiously—the force of John di Vico has augmented fearfully, and the most redoubted adventurer of Europe has enlisted under his banner."

"Does his Holiness," cried the Cardinal anxiously, "speak of Frà Moreale, the Knight of St. John?"

"Of no less a warrior," returned the Pontiff. "I dread the vast ambition of that wild adventurer."

"Your Holiness hath cause," said the Cardinal drily.

“Some letters of his have fallen into the hands of the servant of the Church; they are here: read them, my son.”

Albornoz received and deliberately scanned the letters—this done, he replaced them on the table, and remained for a few moments silent and absorbed.

“What think you, my son,” said the Pope, at length with an impatient and even peevish tone.

“I think that with Montreal’s hot genius and John di Vico’s frigid villainy, your Holiness may live to envy, if not the quiet, at least the revenue, of the professor’s chair.”

“How, Cardinal!” said the pope, hastily, and with an angry flush on his pale brow. The Cardinal quietly proceeded.

“By these letters it seems that Montreal has written to all the commanders of free lances throughout Italy, offering the highest pay of a soldier to every man that will join his standard, combined with the richest plunder of a brigand. He meditates great schemes then!—I know the man!”

“Well,—and our course?”

“Is plain,” said the Cardinal loftily, and with an eye that flashed with a soldier’s fire. “Not a moment is to be lost! Thy son should at once take the field. Up with the banner of the Church!”

“But are we strong enough? our numbers are few. Zeal slackens! the piety of the Baldwins is no more!”

“Your Holiness knows well,” said the Cardinal, “that for the multitude of men there are two watchwords of war—Liberty and Religion. If religion begin to fail, we must employ the profaner word. ‘Up with the banner of the church—and down with the tyrants!’ We will proclaim equal laws, and free government, and, God willing, our camp shall prosper better with those promises than the tents of Montreal with the more vulgar shout of ‘Pay and Rapine.’”

“Giles D’Albornoz,” said the Pope, emphatically, and warmed by the spirit of the Cardinal, he dropped the wonted etiquette of phrase, “I trust implicitly to you. Now the right hand of the church, hereafter perhaps its head. Too well I feel that the lot has fallen on a lowly

place. My successor must requite my deficiencies."

No changing hue, no brightening glance, betrayed to the searching eye of the Pope whatever emotion these words had called up in the breast of the ambitious Cardinal. He bowed his proud head humbly as he answered, "Pray heaven that Innocent VI. may long live to guide the church to glory. For Giles D'Albornoz, less priest than soldier, the din of the camp, the breath of the war-steed, present the only aspirations which he ever dares indulge. But has your Holiness imparted to your servant all that——"

"Nay," interrupted Innocent, "I have yet intelligence equally ominous. This John di Vico,—pest go with him ! who still styles himself (the excommunicated ruffian !) Prefect of Rome, has so filled that unhappy city with his emissaries, that we have well nigh lost the seat of the Apostle. Rome, long in anarchy, seems now in open rebellion. The nobles—sons of Belial—it is true, are once more humbled ; but how ?—one Baroncelli, a new demagogue, the fiercest—the most bloody that the fiend ever helped—has arisen—

is invested by the mob with power, and uses it to butcher the people and insult the Pontiff. Wearied of the crimes of this man, (which are not even decorated by ability,) the shout of the people day and night, along the streets, is for ‘Rienzi the Tribune.’”

“Ha!” said the Cardinal, “Rienzi’s faults then are forgotten in Rome, and there is felt for him the same enthusiasm in that city as in the rest of Italy.”

“Alas ! it is so.”

“It is well, I have thought of this, Rienzi can accompany my progress—”

“My son ! the rebel, the heretic—”

“By your Holiness’s absolution will become quiet subject and orthodox Catholic,” said Albornoz. “Men are good or bad as they suit our purpose. What matters a virtue that is useless, or a crime that is useful, to us? The army of the church proceeds against tyrants—it proclaims everywhere the restoration to the Papal towns of their popular constitutions. Sees not your Holiness, that the acquittal of Rienzi, the popular darling, will be hailed an earnest of your

sincerity—sees not your Holiness that his name will fight for us?—sees not your Holiness that the great demagogue Rienzi must be used to extinguish the little demagogue Baroncelli. We must regain the Romans, whether of the city or whether in the seven towns of John di Vico. When they hear Rienzi is in our camp, trust me, we shall have a multitude of deserters from the tyrants—trust me we shall hear no more of Baroncelli.”

“ Ever sagacious,” said the Pope musingly; “ it is true, we can use this man ; but with caution. His genius is formidable,—”

“ And therefore must be conciliated; if we acquit, we must make him ours. My experience has taught me this, when you cannot slay a demagogue by law, crush him with honours. He must be no longer Tribune of the People. Give him the Patrician title of *Senator*, and he is then the Lieutenant of the Pope!”

“ I will see to this, my son—your suggestions please, but alarm me: he shall at least be examined ;—but if found a heretic ——”

“ Should, I humbly advise, be declared a saint.”

The Pope bent his brow for a moment, but the effort was too much for him, and after a moment's struggle, he fairly laughed aloud.

“Go to, my son,” said he, affectionately patting the Cardinal's sallow cheek. “Go to.—If the world heard thee what would it say?”

“That Giles D'Albornoz had just enough religion to remember that the State is a Church, but not too much to forget that the Church is a State.”

With these words the conference ended. That very evening the Pope decreed that Rienzi should be permitted the trial he had demanded.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LADY AND THE PAGE.

IT wanted three hours of midnight, when Albornoz, resuming his character of gallant, despatched to the Signora Cæsarini the following billet.

“Your commands are obeyed. Rienzi will receive an examination on his faith. It is well that he should be prepared. It may suit your purpose, of which I am so faintly enlightened, to appear to the prisoner what you are—the obtainer of this grace? See how implicitly one noble heart can trust another! I send by the bearer an order that will admit one of your servitors to the prisoner’s cell. Be it, if you will, your task to announce to him, the new crisis of

his fate. Ah ! madam, may fortune be as favourable to me, and grant me the same intercessor—from thy lips my sentence is to come.”

As Albornozy finished this epistle, he summoned his confidential attendant, a Spanish gentleman, who saw nothing in his noble birth that should prevent his fulfilling the various hests of the Cardinal.

“ Alvarez,” said he, “ these to the Signora Cæsarini by another hand. Thou art unknown to her household ; repair to the state tower, this to the governor admits thee. Mark who is admitted to the prisoner Cola di Rienzi ! Know his name, examine whence he comes. Be keen, Alvarez. Learn by what motive the Cæsarini interests herself in the prisoner’s fate. All too of herself, birth, fortunes, lineage, would be welcome intelligence. Thou comprehendest me. It is well—One caution—thou hast no mission from, no connexion with, me. Thou art an officer of the prison, or of the Pope,—what thou wilt. Give me the rosary ; light the lamp before the crucifix ; place yon hair shirt beneath those arms. I

would have it appear as if meant to be hidden ! Tell Gomez that the Dominican preacher is to be admitted."

"Those friars have zeal," continued the Cardinal to himself, as, after executing his orders, Alvarez withdrew. "They would burn a man,—but only on the Bible ! They are worth conciliating, if the triple crown be really worth the winning ; were it mine, I would add the eagle's plume to it."

And plunged into the aspiring future, this bold man forgot even the object of his passion. In real life, after a certain age, ambitious men love indeed ; but it is only as an interlude. And indeed with most men, life has more absorbing though not more frequent concerns than those of love. Love is the business of the idle, but the idleness of the busy.

The Cæsarini was alone when the Cardinal's messenger arrived, and he was scarcely dismissed with a few lines, expressive of a gratitude which seemed to bear down all those guards with which the coldness of the Sig-

nora usually fenced her pride, before the page Angelo was summoned to her presence.

The room was dark with the shades of the gathering night when the youth entered, and he discerned but dimly the outline of the Signora's stately form; but by the tone of her voice, he perceived that she was deeply agitated.

"Angelo," said she, as he approached—"Angelo"—and her voice failed her. She paused as for breath, and again proceeded. "You alone have served us faithfully; you alone shared our escape, our wanderings, our exile—you alone know my secret—you of my train alone are Roman!—Roman! it was once a great name. Angelo, the name has fallen; but it is only because the nature of the Roman Race fell first. Haughty they are, but fickle; fierce, but dastard; vehement in promise, but rotten in their faith. You are a Roman, and though I have proved your truth, your very birth makes me afraid of falsehood."

"Madam," said the page, "I was but a child when you admitted me of your service,

and I am yet only on the verge of manhood. But boy though I yet be, I would brave the stoutest lance of knight, or freebooter, in defence of the faith of Angelo Villani, to his liege Lady and his native land."

"Alas ! alas !" said the Signora bitterly. "Such have been the *words* of thousands of thy race. What have been their deeds ! But I will trust thee, as I have trusted ever. I know that thou art covetous of honour, that thou hast youth's comely and bright ambition ;"—

"I am an orphan and a bastard," said Angelo, bluntly. "And circumstance stings me sharply on to action ; I would win my own name."

"Thou shalt," said the Signora. "We shall live yet to reward thee. And now be quick. Bring hither one of thy page's suits, mantle and head-gear. Quick, I say, and whisper not to a soul what I have asked of thee."

CHAPTER V.

THE INMATE OF THE TOWER.

THE night slowly advanced, and in the highest chamber of that dark and rugged tower which fronted the windows of the Cæsarini's palace, sate a solitary prisoner. A single lamp burnt before him on a table of stone, and threw its rays over an open Bible; and those stern but fantastic legends of the prowess of antient Rome, which the genius of Livy has dignified into history. A chain hung pendent from the vault of the tower, and confined the captive; but so as to leave his limbs at sufficient liberty to measure at will the greater part of the cell. Green and damp were the mighty stones of the walls, and through a narrow aperture, high

out of reach, came the moonlight, and slept in long shadow over the rude floor. A bed at one corner, completed the furniture of the room. Such for months had been the abode of the conqueror of the haughtiest barons, and the luxurious dictator of the stateliest city of the world !

Care, and travel, and time, and adversity, had wrought their change in the person of Rienzi. The proportions of his frame had enlarged from the compact strength of earlier manhood, the clear paleness of his cheek was bespread with a hectic and deceitful glow. Even in his present studies, intent as they seemed, and genial though the lecture to a mind enthusiastic even to fanaticism, his eyes could not rivet themselves as of yore steadily to the page. The charm was gone from the letters. Every now and then he moved restlessly, started, resettled himself, and muttered broken exclamations like a man in an anxious dream. Anon, his gaze impatiently turned upward, about, around, and there was a strange and wandering fire in those large deep eyes, which might have

thrilled the beholder with a vague and unaccountable awe.

Angelo had in the main correctly narrated the latter of the adventures of Rienzi after his fall. He had first with Nina and Angelo betaken himself to Naples, and found a fallacious and brief favour with Louis King of Hungary; that harsh but honourable monarch had refused to yield his illustrious guest to the demands of Clement, but had plainly declared his inability to shelter him in safety. Maintaining secret intercourse, with his partizans at Rome, the fugitive then sought a refuge with the Eremites, sequestered in the lone recesses of the Monte Maiella, where in solitude and thought he had passed a whole year, save the time consumed in his visit to and return from Florence. Taking advantage of the Jubilee in Rome, he had then, disguised as a pilgrim, traversed the vales and mountains still rich in the melancholy ruins of ancient Rome, and entering the city, his restless and ambitious spirit indulged in new but vain conspiracies. Excommunicated a second time by the Cardinal di

Ceccano, and again a fugitive, he shook the dust from his feet as he left the city, and raising his hand towards those walls in which are yet traced the witness of the Tarquins, cried aloud, “Honoured as thy prince—persecuted as thy victim—Rome, Rome, thou shalt yet receive me as thy conqueror !”

Still disguised as a pilgrim, he passed unscathed through Italy into the court of the Emperor Charles of Bohemia, where the page, who had probably witnessed, had rightly narrated, his reception. It is doubtful, however, whether the conduct of the Emperor had been as chivalrous as appears by Angelo’s relation, or whether he had not delivered Rienzi to the Pontiff’s emissaries. At all events, it is certain, that from Prague to Avignon, the path of the fallen Tribune had been as one triumph. The lapse of years—his strange adventures—his unbroken spirit—the disorders of Rome, when relieved from his inflexible justice—the new power that Intellect daily and wonderfully excited over the minds of the rising generation—the eloquence of Petrarch, and the common sympathy of the vulgar for

fallen greatness,—all conspired to make Rienzi the hero of the age. Not a town through which he passed which would not have risked a siege for his protection—not a house that would not have sheltered him—not a hand that would not have struck in his defence. Refusing all offers of aid, disdaining all occasion of escape, inspired by his indomitable hope, and his unalloyed belief in the brightness of his own destinies, the Tribune sought Avignon—and found a dungeon !

These, his external adventures, are briefly and easily told, but who shall tell what passed within?—who narrate the fearful history of the heart?—who paint the rapid changes of emotion and of thought—the indignant grief—the stern dejection—the haughty disappointment that saddened while it never destroyed the resolve of that great soul? Who can say what must have been endured, what meditated, in the hermitage of Maiella;—on the lonely hills of the perished empire it had been his dream to restore;—in the courts of barbarian kings;—and above all, on returning obscure and disguised, amidst the crowds of the Christian world, to the

seat of his former power? What elements of memory, and in what a wild and fiery brain! What reflections to be conned in the dungeons of Avignon, by a man who had pushed into all the fervour of fanaticism—four passions, a single one of which has, in excess, sufficed to wreck the strongest reason—passions, which in themselves it is most difficult to combine,—the dreamer—the aspirant—the very nympholept of freedom, yet of power—of knowledge, yet of religion!

“Ay,” muttered the prisoner, “ay, these texts are comforting—comforting. The righteous are not alway oppressed.” With a long sigh he deliberately put aside the Bible, kissed it with great reverence, remained silent, and musing for some minutes, and then as a slight noise was heard at one corner of the cell, said softly, “Ah, my friends, my comrades, the rats! it is their hour—I am glad I put aside the bread for them!” His eye brightened, as it now detected those strange and unsocial animals, venturing forth through a hole in the wall and,—darkening the moonshine on the floor,—

steal fearlessly towards him. He flung some fragments of bread to them, and for some moments watched their gambols with a smile. "Manchino, the white-faced rascal! he beats all the rest—ha, ha! he is a superior wretch—he commands the tribe, and will venture the first into the trap. How will he bite against the steel, the fine fellow! while all the ignobler herd will gaze at him afar off, and quake and fear, and never help. Yet if united, they might gnaw the trap and release their leader! Ah, ye are base vermin, and while ye eat my bread, if death come upon me, and I were clay, ye would riot on my carcase. Away!" and clapping his hands, the chain round him clanked harshly, and the noisome co-mates of his dungeon vanished in an instant.

That singular and eccentric humour which marked Rienzi, and which had seemed a buffoonery to the stolid sullenness of the Roman nobles, still retained its old expression in his countenance, and he laughed loud as he saw the vermin hurry back to their hiding place.

"A little noise and the clank of a chain—

fie, how ye imitate mankind !” Again he sank into silence, and then heavily and listlessly drawing towards him the animated tales of Livy, said, “ An hour to midnight !—waking dreams are better than sleep. Well, history tells us how men have risen—ay, and nations too—after wilder falls than that of Rienzi or of Rome !”

In a few minutes, he was apparently absorbed in the lecture ; so intent indeed was he in the task, that he did not hear the steps which wound the spiral stairs that conducted to his cell, and it was not till the wards harshly grated beneath the huge key, and the door creaked on its hinges, that Rienzi, in amaze at intrusion at so unwonted an hour, lifted his eyes. The door had reclosed on the dungeon, and by the lonely and pale lamp, he beheld a figure leaning, as for support, against the wall. The figure was wrapt from head to foot in the long cloak of the day, and aided by a broad hat, shaded by plumes, concealed even the features of the visiter.

Rienzi gazed long and wistfully.

“ Speak,” he said at length, putting his hand

to his brow. "Methinks either long solitude has bewildered me, or, sweet sir, your apparition dazzles. I know you not—am I sure?" and Rienzi's hair bristled while he slowly rose—"Am I sure that it is living man who stands before me!—Angels have entered the prison-house before now. Alas! an angel's comfort never was more needed."

The stranger answered not, but the captive saw that his heart heaved even beneath his cloak; loud sobs choked his voice; at length, as by a violent effort, he sprung forward, and sunk at the Tribune's feet. The disguising hat, the long mantle fell to the ground—it was the face of a woman that looked upward through passionate and glazing tears—the arms of a woman that clasped the prisoner's knees! Rienzi gazed mute and motionless as stone. "Powers and saints of heaven!" he murmured at last, "do ye tempt me further!—is it?—no, no—yet speak!"

"Beloved—adored!—do you not know me?"

"It is—it is!" shrieked Rienzi wildly, "it is my Nina—my wife—my—" His voice forsook

him. Clapsed in each other's arms, the unfortunates for some moments seemed to have lost even the sense of delight at their reunion. It was as an unconscious and deep trance, through which something *like* a dream only faintly and indistinctively stirs.

At length recovered—at length restored, the first broken exclamations, the first wild caresses of joy over—Nina lifted her head from her husband's bosom, and gazed sadly on his countenance—"Oh, what thou hast known since we parted!—what, since that hour, when borne on by thy bold heart and wild destiny, thou didst leave me in the Imperial court, to seek again the diadem and find the chain! Ah! why did I heed thy commands—why suffer thee to depart alone? How often, in thy progress hitherward, in doubt, in danger, might this bosom have been thy resting-place, and this voice have whispered comfort to thy soul! Thou art well, my lord—my Cola? Thy pulse beats quicker than of old—thy brow is furrowed. Ah! tell me thou art well!"

"Well!" said Rienzi, mechanically. "Me-

thinks so !—the mind diseased blunts all sense of bodily decay. Well !—yes ! And, you—you, at least, are not changed, save to maturer beauty. The glory of the laurel-wreath has not faded from thy brow. Thou shalt yet—” then breaking off abruptly—“ Rome—tell me of Rome ! And thou—how camest thou hither ? Ah ! perhaps my doom is set, and in their mercy they have vouchsafed that I should see thee once more before the deathsman blinds me. I remember, it is the grace vouchsafed to malefactors. When *I* was a lord of life and death, I too permitted the meanest criminal to say farewell to those he loved.”

“ No—not so, Cola !” exclaimed Nina, putting her hand before his mouth. “ I bring thee more auspicious tidings. To-morrow thou art to be heard. The favour of the court is propitiated. Thou wilt be acquitted.”

“ Ha ! speak again.”

“ Thou wilt be heard, my Cola—thou must be acquitted !”

“ And Rome be free !—Great God, I thank thee !”

The Tribune sank on his knees, and never had his heart, in his youngest and purest hour, poured forth thanksgiving more fervent, yet less selfish. When he rose again, the whole man seemed changed. His eye had resumed its earlier expression of deep and serene command. Majesty sate upon his brow. The sorrows of the exile were forgotten. In his sanguine and rapid thoughts, he stood once more the guardian of his country,—and its sovereign !

Nina gazed upon him with that intense and devoted worship, which, for Rienzi, the hero of her youth, steeped her vainer, and her harder qualities, in all the fondness of the softest woman. “Such,” thought she, “was his look eight years ago, when he left my maiden chamber, full of the mighty schemes which liberated Rome—such his look, when at the dawning sun he towered amidst the crouching barons, and the kneeling population, of the city he had made his throne !”

“Yes, Nina !” said Rienzi, as he turned and caught her eye. “My soul tells me that my hour is at hand. If they try me openly, they

dare not convict—if they acquit me, they dare not but restore. To-morrow, saidst thou, to-morrow?”

“To-morrow, Rienzi; be prepared!”

“I am—for triumph! But tell me what happy chance brought thee to Avignon?”

“*Chance*, Cola!” said Nina, with reproachful tenderness. “Could I know that thou wert in the dungeons of the Pontiff, and linger in idle security at Prague? Even at the Emperor’s court thou hadst thy partizans and favourers. Gold was easily procured. I repaired to Florence—disguised my name—and came hither to plot, to scheme, to win thy liberty, or to die with thee. Ah! did not thy heart tell thee that morning and night the eyes of thy faithful Nina gazed upon this gloomy tower; and that one friend, humble though she be, never could forsake thee!”

“Sweet Nina! Yet—yet—at Avignon power yields not to beauty without reward. Remember, there is a worse death than the pause of life.”

Nina turned pale. “Fear not,” she said,

with a low but determined voice; "fear not, that men's lips should say Rienzi's wife delivered him. None in this corrupted court know that I am thy wife."

"Woman," said the Tribune, sternly; "thy lips elude the answer I would seek. In our degenerate time and land, thy sex and ours forget too basely what foulness writes a leprosy in the smallest stain upon a matron's honour. That thy heart would never wrong me, I believe; but if thy weakness, thy fear of my death should wrong me, thou art a bitterer foe to Rienzi than the swords of the Colonna. Nina, speak!"

"Oh, that my soul could speak," answered Nina. "Thy words are music to me, and not a thought of mine but echoes them. Could I touch this hand, could I meet that eye, and not know that death were dearer to thee than shame? Rienzi, when last we parted, in sadness, yet in hope, what were thy words to me?"

"I remember them well," returned the Tribune:—"I leave thee," I said, 'to keep alive

at the Emperor's court, by thy genius, the Great Cause. Thou hast youth and beauty—and courts have lawless and ruffian suitors. I give thee no caution; it were beneath thee and me. But I leave thee the power of death.' And with that, Nina——"

"Thy hands tremblingly placed in mine this dagger. I live—need I say more?"

"My noble and beloved Nina, it is enough. Keep the dagger yet."

"Yes; till we meet in the Capitol of Rome!"

A slight tap was heard at the door, Nina regained, in an instant, her disguise.

"It is on the stroke of midnight," said the jailor, appearing at the threshold.

"I come," said Nina.

"And thou hast to prepare thy thoughts," she whispered to Rienzi: "arm all thy glorious intellect. Alas! is it again we part. How my heart sinks!"

The presence of the jailor at the threshold broke the bitterness of parting by abridging it. The false page pressed her lips on the prisoner's hand, and left the cell.

The jailor, lingering behind for a moment, placed a parchment on the table. It was the summons from the court appointed for the trial of the Tribune.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SCENT DOES NOT LIE—THE PRIEST AND THE
SOLDIER.

ON descending the stairs, Nina was met by Alvarez.

“Fair page,” said the Spaniard, gaily, “thy name, thou tellest me, is Villani?—Angelo Villani—why I know thy kinsman, methinks. Vouchsafe, young master, to enter this chamber, and drink a night-cup to thy lady’s health; I would fain learn tidings of my old friends.”

“Another time,” answered the false Angelo, drawing the cloak closer round her face; “it is late—I am hurried.”

“Nay,” said the Spaniard, “you escape me not so easily;” and he caught firm hold of the page’s shoulder.

“ Unhand me, sir,” said Nina, haughtily, and almost weeping, for her strong nerves were yet unstrung. “ Jailor, at thy peril—unbar the gates.”

“ So hot,” said Alvarez, surprised at so great a waste of dignity in a page; “ nay, I meant not to offend thee. May I wait on thy pageship to-morrow?”

“ Ay, to-morrow,” said Nina, eager to escape.

“ And meanwhile,” said Alvarez, “ I will accompany thee home—we can confer by the way.”

So saying, without regarding the protestations of the supposed page, he passed with Nina into the open air. “ Your lady,” said he, carelessly, “ is wondrous fair; her lightest will is law to the greatest noble of Avignon,—methinks she is of Naples—is it so? Art thou dumb, sweet youth?”

The page did not answer, but with a step so rapid that it almost put the slow Spaniard out of breath, hastened along the narrow space between the tower and the palace of the Signora Cæsarini, nor could all the efforts of Alvarez draw forth a single syllable from his reluctant

companion, till they reached the gates of the palace, and he found himself discourteously and discomfited left without the walls.

“ A plague on the boy !” said he, biting his lips ; “ if the Cardinal thrive as well as his servant, by’r lady, his Eminence is a happy man !”

By no means pleased with the prospect of an interview with Albornoz, who, like most able men, valued the talents of those he employed exactly in proportion to their success, the Spaniard slowly returned home. With the license accorded to him, he entered the Cardinal’s chamber somewhat abruptly, and perceived him in earnest conversation with a Cavalier, whose long moustache curled upward, and the bright cuirass he wore underneath his mantle, seemed to betoken him of martial profession. Pleased with the respite, Alvarez hastily withdrew ; and in fact, the Cardinal’s thoughts at that moment, and for that night, were bent upon other subjects than those of love.

The interruption served, however, to shorten the conversation between Albornoz and his guest. The latter rose.

“ I think” said, he, buckling on a short and broad rapier, which he had laid aside during the interview, “ I think, my Lord Cardinal, that your Eminence encourages me to consider that our negociation stands a fair chance of a prosperous close. Ten thousand florins, and my brother quits Viterbo, and launches the thunderbolt of the Company on the lands of Rimini. On your part——”

“ On my part it is agreed,” said the Cardinal, “ that the army of the Church interferes not with the course of your brother’s arms—there is peace between us. One warrior understands another !”

“ And the word of Giles D’Albornoz, son of the royal race of Arragon, is a guarantee for the faith of a Cardinal,” replied the Cavalier, with a smile. “ It is, my Lord, in your *former* quality that we treat.”

“ There is my right-hand,” answered Albornoz, too politic to heed the insinuation. The Cavalier raised it respectfully to his lips, and his armed tread was soon heard descending the stairs.

“ Victory !” cried Albornoz, tossing his arms aloof; “ Victory, now thou art mine.”

With that he rose hastily—deposited his papers in an iron chest—and opening a concealed door behind the arras, entered a chamber that rather resembled a monk’s cell than the apartment of a prince. Over a mean pallet hung a sword, a dagger, and a rude image of the Virgin. Without summoning Alvarez, the Cardinal unrobed, and in a few moments was asleep.

CHAPTER VII.

VAUCLUSE AND ITS GENIUS LOCI—OLD ACQUAINT-
ANCE RENEWED.

THE next day at early noon the Cavalier, whom our last chapter presented to the reader, was seen mounted on a strong Norman horse, winding his way slowly along a green and pleasant path some miles from Avignon. At length he found himself in a wild and romantic valley through which wandered that delightful river whose name the verse of Petrarch has given to so beloved a fame. Sheltered by rocks—and in this part winding through the greenest banks, enamelled with a thousand wild flowers and water-weeds—went the chrystal Sorgia. Advancing farther, the landscape assumed a more sombre and sterile aspect. The valley seemed enclosed or shut in by fantastic rocks of a

thousand shapes—down which dashed and glittered a thousand rivulets. And, in the very wildest of the scene, the ground suddenly opened into a quaint and cultivated garden, through which, amidst a profusion of foliage, was seen a small and lowly mansion,—the hermitage of the place. The horseman was in the valley of the Vaucluse;—and before his eye lay the garden and the house of PETRARCH ! Carelessly, however, his eye scanned the consecrated spot—and unconsciously it rested, for a moment, upon a solitary figure seated musingly by the margin of the river. A large dog at the side of the noonday idler barked at the horseman as he rode on. “ A brave animal and a deep bay ! ” thought the traveller; to him the dog seemed an object much more interesting than its master ! And so,—as the crowd of little men pass, unheeding and unmoved, those whom posterity acknowledges the landmarks of their age,—the horseman turned his glance from their Poet !

Thrice blessed name ! Immortal Florentine ! not as the lover, nor even as the poet, do I bow before thy consecrated memory — venerating

thee as one it were sacrilege to introduce in this unworthy page—save by name and as a shadow; but as the first who ever asserted to people and to prince, the august majesty of Letters; who claimed to genius the prerogative to influence states, to control opinion, to hold an empire over the hearts of men, and prepare events by animating passion, and guiding thought! What, (though but feebly felt and dimly seen)—what do we yet owe to Thee if Knowledge be now a Power; if MIND be a Prophet, and a Fate, fore-telling and fore-dooming the things to come! From the greatest to the least of us, to whom the pen is at once a sceptre and a sword, the low-born Florentine* has been the arch-messenger to smooth the way and prepare the welcome. Yes! even the meanest of the aftercomers—even he who now vents his gratitude,—is thine everlasting debtor! Thine, how largely is the honour, if his labours, humble though they be, find an audience wherever

* I need scarcely say that it is his origin, not his actual birth, which entitles us to term Petrarch a Florentine.

literature is known—preaching in remotest lands the moral of forgotten revolutions,—and scattering in the palace and the market-place the seeds that shall ripen into fruit when the hand of the sower shall be dust, and his very name, perhaps, be lost ! For few, alas ! are they, whose *names* may outlive the grave ; but the *thoughts* of every man who writes, are made undying ;—others appropriate, advance, exalt them, and millions of minds unknown, undreamt of, are required to produce the immortality of one !

Indulging meditations very different from those which the idea of Petrarch awakens in a later time, the Cavalier pursued his path.

The valley was long left behind, and the way grew more and more faintly traced, until it terminated in a wood, through whose tangled boughs the sunlight broke playfully. At length, the wood opened into a wide glade, from which rose a precipitous ascent, crowned with the ruins of an old castle. The traveller dismounted, led his horse up the ascent, and, gaining the ruins, left his steed within one of the roofless chambers, overgrown with the longest

grass, and a profusion of wild shrubs; and ascending, with some toil, a narrow and broken staircase, found himself in a small room, less decayed than the rest, of which the roof and floor were yet whole.

Stretched on the ground in his cloak, and leaning his head thoughtfully on his hand, was a man of tall stature, and middle age. He lifted himself on his arm with great alacrity as the Cavalier entered.

“Well, Brettone, I have counted the hours—what tidings?”

“Albornoz consents.”

“Glad news! Thou givest me new life. *Pardieu*, I shall breakfast all the better for this, my brother. Hast thou remembered that I am famishing?”

Brettone drew from beneath his cloak a sufficiently huge flask of wine, and a small panier, tolerably well filled; the inmate of the tower threw himself upon the provant with great devotion. And both the soldiers, for such they were, stretched at length on the ground, regaled themselves with considerable zest,

talking hastily and familiarly between every mouthful.

“ I say, Brettone, thou playest unfairly ; thou hast already devoured more than half the pasty : push it hitherward. And so the Cardinal consents ! What manner of man is he ? Able as they say ? ”

“ Quick, sharp, and earnest, with an eye of fire, few words, and comes to the point.”

“ Unlike a priest then ;—a good brigand spoilt. What hast thou heard of the force he heads ? Ho, not so fast with the wine.”

“ Scanty at present. He relies on recruits throughout Italy.”

“ What his designs for Rome ? There, my brother, there tends my secret soul ! As for these petty towns and petty tyrants, I care not how they fall, or by whom. But the Pope must not return to Rome. Rome must be mine. The city of a new empire, the conquest of a new Attila ! There, every circumstance combines in my favour !—the absence of the Pope, the weakness of the middle class, the poverty of the populace, the imbecile though ferocious

barbarism of the Barons, have long concurred to render Rome the most facile, while the most glorious conquest."

"My brother, pray heaven, your ambition do not wreck you at last; you are ever losing sight of the land. Surely with the immense wealth we are acquiring, we may—"

"Aspire to something greater than free companions, generals to-day and adventurers to-morrow. Rememberest thou, how the Norman sword won Sicily, and how the hastard William converted on the field of Hastings his baton into a sceptre. I tell thee, Brettone, that this loose Italy has crowns on the hedge for every one who can lead men to carry off at the point of the lance. My course is taken, I will form the fairest army in Italy, and with it I will win a throne in the Capitol. Fool that I was six years ago!—Instead of deputing that mad dolt Pepin, of Minorbino, had I myself deserted the Hungarian, and repaired with my soldiery to Rome, the fall of Rienzi would have been followed by the rise of Montreal. Pepin was outwitted, and threw away the prey after he had

hunted it down. The lion shall not again trust the chase to the jackall !”

“ Walter, thou speakest of the fate of Rienzi, let it warn thee !”

“ Rienzi !” replied Montreal ; “ I know the man ! in peaceful times or with an honest people, he would have founded a great dynasty. But he dreamt of laws and liberty, for men who despise the first and will not protect the last. We of a harder race, know that a new throne must be built by the feudal and not the civil system. And in the city we must but transport the camp. It is by the multitude that the proud Tribune gained power,—by the multitude he lost it ; it is by the sword that I will win it, and by the sword will I keep it.”

“ Rienzi was too cruel, he should not have incensed the Barons,” said Brettone, about to finish the flask, when the strong hand of his brother plucked it from him, and anticipated the design.

“ Pooh,” said Montreal, finishing the draught with a long sigh, “ he was not cruel enough. He sought only to be just, and not to distin-

guish between noble and peasant. He should have distinguished ! He should have exterminated the nobles root and branch. But this no Italian can do. This is reserved for me."

"Thou wouldst not butcher all the best blood of Rome?"

"Butcher ! No, but I would seize their lands, and endow with them a new nobility, the hardy and fierce nobility of the north, who well know how to guard their prince, and *will* guard him, as the fountain of their own power. Enough of this now. And talking of Rienzi—rots he still in his dungeon?"

"Why, this morning, ere I left, I heard strange news. The town was astir—groups in every corner. They said that Rienzi's trial was to be to-day, and from the names of the judges chosen, it is suspected that acquittal is already determined on."

"Ha ! thou should'st have told me of this before."

"Should he be restored to Rome, would it militate against thy plans?"

"Humph ! I know not—deep thought and

dexterous management would be needed. I would fain not leave this spot till I hear what is decided on."

"Surely, Walter, it would have been wiser and safer to have stayed with thy soldiery, and entrusted me with the absolute conduct of this affair."

"Not so," answered Montreal; "thou art a bold fellow enough, and a cunning——but my head in these matters is better than thine. Besides," continued the Knight, lowering his voice, and shading his face, "I had vowed a pilgrimage to the beloved river, and the old trysting place. Ah, me!——But all this, Brettone, thou understandest not—let it pass. As for my safety, since we have come to this amnesty with Albornoz, I fear but little danger even if discovered: besides, I want the florins. There are those in this country, Germans, who could eat an Italian army at a meal, whom I would fain engage, and their leaders want earnest money—the griping knaves!—How are the Cardinal's florins to be paid?"

"Half now—half when thy troops are before Rimini!"

“ Rimini ! the thought whets my sword. Rememberest thou how that accursed Malatesta drove me from Aversa, broke up my camp, and made me render to him all my booty ? There fell the work of years ! But for that, my banner now would be floating over St. Angelo. I will pay back the debt with fire and sword, ere the summer has shed its leaves.”

The fair countenance of Montreal grew terrible as he uttered these words ; his hands griped the handle of his sword, and his strong frame heaved visibly ; tokens of the fierce and unsparing passions, by the aid of which a life of rapine and revenge had corrupted a nature originally full no less of the mercy than the courage of Provençal chivalry.

Such was the fearful man who now (the wildness of his youth sobered, and his ambition hardened and concentered) was the rival with Rienzi for the mastery of Rome.

CHAP. VIII.

THE CROWD—THE TRIAL—THE VERDICT—THE
SOLDIER AND THE PAGE.

It was on the following evening that a considerable crowd had gathered in the streets of Avignon. It was the second day of the examination of Rienzi, and with every moment was expected the announcement of the verdict. Amongst the foreigners of all countries assembled in that seat of the papal splendour, the interest was intense. The Italians, even of the highest rank, were in favour of the Tribune, the French against. As for the good towns-people of Avignon themselves, they felt but little excitement in any thing that did not bring money into their pockets; and if it had been put to the secret

vote, no doubt there would have been a vast majority for burning the prisoner, as a marketable speculation !

Amongst the crowd was a tall man in a plain and rusty suit of armour, but with an air of knightly bearing, which somewhat belied the coarseness of his mail ; he wore no helmet, but a small morion of black leather, with a long projecting shade, much used by wayfarers in the hot climates of the south. A black patch covered nearly the whole of one cheek, and altogether he bore the appearance of a grim soldier, with whom war had dealt harshly, both in purse and person.

Many were the jests at the shabby swordsman's expense, with which that lively population amused their impatience ; and though the shade of the morion concealed his eyes, an arch and merry smile about the corners of his mouth showed that he could take a jest at himself.

“ Well,” said one of the crowd, (a rich Milanese,) “ I am of a state that *was* free, and I trust the people's man will have justice shown him.”

“Amen,” said a grave Florentine.

“They say,” whispered a young student from Paris, to a learned doctor of laws, with whom he abode, “that his defence has been a masterpiece.”

“He hath taken no degrees,” replied the doctor doubtingly. “Ho, friend, why dost thou push me so? thou hast rent my robe.”

This was said to a minstrel, or jongleur, who, with a small lute slung round him, was making his way with great earnestness through the throng.

“I beg pardon, worthy sir,” said the minstrel; “but this is a scene to be sung of! Centuries hence; ay, and in lands remote, legend and song will tell the fortunes of Cola di Rienzi, the friend of Petrarch and the Tribune of Rome!”

The young French student turned quickly round to the minstrel, with a glow on his pale face; not sharing the general sentiments of his countrymen against Rienzi, he felt that it was an era in the world when a minstrel spoke thus of the heroes of intellect—not of war.

At this time the tall soldier was tapped impatiently on the back.

“ I pray thee, great sir,” said a sharp and imperious voice, “ to withdraw that tall bulk of thine a little on one side—I cannot see through thee ; and I would fain my eyes were among the first to catch a glimpse of Rienzi as he passes from the court.”

“ Fair sir page,” replied the soldier good-humouredly, as he made way for Angelo Villani, “ thou wilt not always find that way in the world is won by commanding the strong. When thou art older thou wilt beard the weak, and the strong thou wilt wheedle.”

“ I must change my nature then,” answered Angelo, (who was of somewhat small stature, and not yet come to his full growth,) trying still to raise himself above the heads of the crowd.

The soldier looked at him approvingly ; and as he looked he sighed, and his lips worked with some strange emotion.

“ Thou speakest well,” said he, after a pause. “ Pardon me the rudeness of the question ; but art thou of Italy?—thy tongue savours of the

Roman dialect; yet I have seen lineaments like thine on this side the Alps?"

"It may be, good fellow," said the page haughtily; "but I thank heaven that I am of Rome."

At this moment a loud shout burst from that part of the crowd nearest the court. The sound of trumpets hushed the throng again into deep and breathless silence, while the Pope's guards, ranged along the space conducting from the court, drew themselves up more erect, and fell a step or two back upon the crowd.

As the trumpet ceased, the voice of a herald was heard, but it did not penetrate within several yards of the spot where Angelo and the soldier stood; and it was only by a mighty shout that in a moment circled through and was echoed back by, the wide multitude—by the waving of kerchiefs from the windows—by broken ejaculations, that were caught up from lip to lip, that the page knew that Rienzi was acquitted!

"I would I could see his face," sighed the page querulously.

“And thou shalt,” said the soldier; and he caught up the boy in his arms, and pressed on with the strength of a giant, parting the living stream from right to left, as he took his way to a place near the guards, and by which Rienzi was sure to pass.

The page, half-pleased, half-indignant, struggled a little, but finding it in vain, consented tacitly to what he felt an outrage on his dignity.

“Never mind,” said the soldier, “thou art the first I ever willingly raised above myself; and I do it now for the sake of thy fair face, that reminds me of one I loved.”

But these last words were spoken low, and the boy in his anxiety to see the hero of Rome did not hear, or heed, them. Presently Rienzi came by! two gentlemen, of the Pope’s own following, walked by his side. He moved slowly, amidst the gratulations of the crowd, looking neither to the right nor left. His bearing was firm and collected, and, save by the flush of his cheek, there was no external sign of joy or excitement. Flowers dropped from every balcony on his path; and just when he came to a broader

space, where the ground was somewhat higher, and where he was in fuller view of the houses around, he paused—and, uncovering, acknowledged the homage he had received, with a look—a gesture—which each who beheld never forgot. It haunted even that gay and thoughtless court, when the last tale of Rienzi's life reached their ears. And Angelo, clinging then round that soldier's neck, recalled—but we must not anticipate.

It was not, however, to the dark tower that Rienzi returned. His home was prepared at the palace of the Cardinal D'Albornoz. The next day he was admitted to the Pope's presence, and on the evening of that day he was proclaimed Senator of Rome.

Meanwhile the soldier had placed Angelo on the ground; and as the page faltered out no courteous thanks, he interrupted him in a sad and kind voice, the tone of which struck the page forcibly, so little did it suit the rough and homely appearance of the man.

“We part,” he said, “as strangers, fair boy; and since thou sayest thou art of Rome, there

is no reason why my heart should have warmed to thee as it has done : yet if ever thou wantest a friend,—seek him”—and the soldier’s voice sunk into a whisper—“in Walter de Montreal.”

Ere the page recovered his surprise at that redoubted name, which his earliest childhood had been taught to dread, the Knight of St. John had vanished amongst the crowd.

CHAP. IX.

ALBORNOZ AND NINA.

BUT the eyes which, above all others, thirsted for a glimpse of the released captive, were forbidden that delight. Alone in her chamber, Nina awaited the result of the trial. She heard the shouts, the exclamations, the tramp of thousands along the street; she felt that the victory was won; and, her heart long overcharged, she burst into passionate tears. The return of Angelo soon acquainted her with all that had passed; but it somewhat chilled her joy to find Rienzi was the guest of the dreaded Cardinal. That shock, in which certainty, however happy, replaces suspense, had so powerful

an effect on her frame, joined to her loathing fear of a visit from the Cardinal, that she became for three days alarmingly ill; and it was only on the fifth day from that which saw Rienzi endowed with the rank of Senator of Rome, that she was recovered sufficiently to admit Albornozy to her presence.

The Cardinal had sent daily to inquire after her health, and his inquiries, to her alarmed mind, had appeared to insinuate a pretension to the right to make them. Meanwhile Albornozy had had enough to divert and occupy his thoughts. Having bought off the formidable Montreal from the service of John di Vico, one of the ablest and fiercest enemies of the Church, he resolved to march to the territories of that tyrant as expeditiously as possible, and so not to allow him time to obtain the assistance of any other band of the mercenary adventurers, who found Italy the market for their valour. Occupied with raising troops, procuring money, corresponding with the various free states, and establishing alliances in aid of his ulterior and more ambitious projects at the court of Avig-

non, the Cardinal waited with tolerable resignation the time when he might claim from the Signora Caesarini the reward to which he deemed himself entitled. Meanwhile he had held his first conversations with Rienzi, and, under the semblance of courtesy to the acquitted Tribune, Albornozy had received him as his guest, in order to make himself master of the character and disposition of one in whom he sought a minister and a tool. That miraculous and magic art, attested by all the historians of the time, which Rienzi possessed over every one with whom he came into contact, however various in temper, views, or station, had not deserted him in his audience of the Pontiff. So faithfully had he described the true condition of Rome, so logically had he traced the causes and the remedies of the evils she endured, so sanguinely had he spoken of his own capacities for administering her affairs, and so brilliantly had he painted the prospects which that administration opened to the weal of the Church, and the interests of the Pope, that Innocent, though a keen and shrewd, and somewhat sceptical,

calculator of human chances, was entirely fascinated by the eloquence of the Roman.

“Is this the man,” he is reported to have said, “whom for twelve months we have treated as a prisoner and a criminal? Would that it were on his shoulders only that the Christian empire reposed!”

At the close of the interview he had, with every mark of favour and distinction, conferred upon Rienzi the rank of Senator, which, in fact, was that of Viceroy of Rome, and had willingly acceded to all the projects which the enterprising Rienzi had once more formed—not only for recovering the territories of the Church, but for extending the dictatorial sway of the Seven Hilled City, over the old dependencies of Italy.

Albornoz, to whom the Pope retailed this conversation, was somewhat jealous of the favour the new Senator had so suddenly acquired, and immediately on his return home sought an interview with his guest. In his heart, the Lord Cardinal, emphatically a man of action and business, regarded Rienzi as one rather cunning than wise—rather fortunate than great

—a mixture of the pedant and the demagogue. But after a long and scrutinizing conversation with the new senator, even he yielded to the spell of his enchanting and master intellect. Reluctantly Albornoze confessed to himself that Rienzi's rise was not the thing of chance, yet more reluctantly he perceived that the senator was one whom he might treat with as an equal, but could not rule as a minion. And he entertained serious doubts whether it would be wise to reinstate him in a power which he evinced the capacity to wield and the genius to extend. Still however he did not repent the share he had taken in Rienzi's acquittal. His presence in a camp so thinly peopled was a matter greatly to be desired. And through his influence, the Cardinal more than ever trusted to enlist the Romans in favour of his enterprise for the recovery of the territory of St. Peter!

Rienzi, who panted once more to behold his Nina, endeared to him by trial and absence, as by a fresh bridal, was not however able to discover the name she had assumed at Avignon; and his residence with the Cardinal, closely but

respectfully watched as he was, forbade Nina all opportunity of corresponding with him. Some half and bantering hints which Albornoz had dropped upon the interest taken in his welfare by the most celebrated beauty of Avignon had filled him with a vague alarm which he trembled to acknowledge even to himself. But the *volto sciolto*, which, in common with all Italian politicians, concealed whatever were his *pensieri stretti*—enabled him to baffle completely the jealous and lynxlike observation of the Cardinal. Nor had Alvarez been better enabled to satisfy the curiosity of his master. He had indeed sought the page Villani, but the short and imperious manner of that wayward and haughty boy had cut short all attempt at cross examination. And all he could ascertain was, that the real Angelo Villani was not the Angelo Villani who had visited Rienzi.

Trusting at last that he should learn all, and inflamed, by such passion and such hope as he was capable of feeling, Albornoz now took his way to the Cæsarini's palace.

He was ushered with due state into the apart-

ment of the Signora. He found her pale, and with the traces of illness upon her noble and statue-like features. She rose as he entered; and when he approached, she half bent her knee, and raised his hand to her lips. Surprised and delighted at a reception so new, the Cardinal hastened to prevent the condescension; retaining both her hands, he attempted gently to draw them to his heart.

“Fairest!” he whispered, “couldst thou know how I have mourned thy illness—and yet it has but left thee more lovely, as the rain only brightens the flower. Ah! happy if I have promoted thy lightest wish, and if in thine eyes I may henceforth seek at once an angel to guide me and a paradise to reward.”

Nina, releasing her hand, waved it gently, and motioned the Cardinal to a seat. Seating herself at a little distance, she then spoke with great gravity and downcast eyes.

“My Lord, it is your intercession, joined to his own innocence, that has released from yonder tower the elected governor of the people of

Rome. But freedom is the least of the generous gifts you have conferred; there is a greater in a fair name vindicated, and rightful honours re-bestowed. For this I rest ever your debtor; for this, if I bear children, they shall be taught to bless your name; for this the historian who recalls the deeds of this age, and the fortunes of Cola di Rienzi, shall add a new chaplet to the wreaths you have already won. Lord Cardinal, I may have erred. I may have offended you—you may accuse me of woman's artifice. Speak not, wonder not, hear me out. I have but one excuse, when I say that I held justified any means short of dishonour, to save the life and restore the fortunes of Cola di Rienzi. Know, my Lord, that she who now addresses you is his wife."

The Cardinal remained motionless and silent. But his sallow countenance grew flushed from the brow to the neck, and his thin lips quivered for a moment, and then broke into a withering and bitter smile. At length he rose from his seat, very slowly, and said in a voice trembling with passion,

“It is well, madam. Giles D’Albornoz has been, then, a puppet in the hands, a stepping-stone in the rise, of the plebeian demagogue of Rome. You but played upon me for your own purposes; and nothing short of a Cardinal of Spain, and a prince of the royal blood of Arragon, was meet to be the instrument of a mountebank’s juggle. Madam, yourself and your husband might justly be accused of ambition—”

“Cease, my Lord,” said Nina, with unspeakable dignity; “whatever offence has been committed against you, was mine alone. Till after our last interview, Rienzi knew not even of my presence at Avignon.”

“At our last interview, lady, (you do well to recall it!) methinks there was a hinted and implied contract. I have fulfilled my part—I claim yours. Mark me! I do not forego that claim. As easily as I rend this glove can I rend the parchment which proclaims thy husband ‘the Senator of Rome.’ The dungeon is not death, and its door will open *twice*.”

“My Lord—my Lord!” cried Nina, sick with terror, “wrong not so your noble nature, your

great name, your sacred rank, your chivalric blood. You are of the knightly race of Spain, yours not the sullen, low, and inexorable vices that stain the petty tyrants of this unhappy land. You are no Visconti—no Castracani—you cannot stain your laurels with revenge upon a woman. Hear me,” she continued, and she fell abruptly at his feet; “men dupe, deceive our sex—and for selfish purposes—they are pardoned—even by their victims. Did *I* deceive you with a false hope! Well—what my object?—what my excuse? My husband’s liberty—my land’s salvation. Woman,—my Lord, alas, your sex too rarely understand her weakness or her greatness! Erring—all human as she is to others—God gifts her with a thousand virtues to the one she loves! It is from that love that she alone drinks her nobler nature. For the hero of her worship she has the meekness of the dove—the devotion of the saint; for his safety in peril, for his rescue in misfortune, her vain sense imbibes the sagacity of the serpent—her weak heart, the courage of the lioness! It is this, which in absence,

made me mask my heart in smiles, that the friends of the houseless exile might not despair of his fate—it is this which brought me through forests beset with robbers, and less gentle chiefs, to watch the stars upon yon solitary tower—it was this that led my steps to the revels of your hated court—this which made me seek a deliverer in the noblest of its chiefs—it is this which has at last opened the dungeon door to the prisoner now within your halls: and this, Lord Cardinal,” added Nina, rising, and folding her arms upon her heart;—“this, if your anger seeks a victim, will inspire me to die without a groan,—but without dishonour!”

Albornoz remained rooted to the ground. Amazement—emotion—admiration—all busy at his heart. He gazed at Nina’s flashing eyes and heaving bosom as a warrior of old upon a prophetess that is inspired. His eyes were rivetted to hers as by a spell. He tried to speak, but his voice failed him. Nina continued.

“Yes, my lord; these are no idle words! If thou seekest revenge, it is in thy power.

Undo what thou hast done. Give Rienzi back to the dungeon, or to disgrace, and you are avenged; but not on *him*. All the hearts of Italy shall become to him a second Nina! I am the guilty one, and I the sufferer. Hear me swear—in that instant which sees new wrong to Rienzi, this hand is my executioner.—My Lord, I supplicate you no longer!”

Albornoz continued deeply moved. Nina but rightly judged him, when she distinguished the aspiring Spaniard from the barbarous and unrelenting voluptuaries of Italy. Despite the profligacy that stained his sacred robe—despite all the acquired and increasing callousness of a hard, scheming, and sceptical man, cast amidst the worst natures of the worst of times—there lingered yet in his soul much of the chivalric honour of his race and country. High thoughts and daring spirits touched a congenial string in his heart, and not the less, in that he had but rarely met them in his experience of camps and courts. For the first time in his life, he felt that he had seen the woman, that could have contented

him even with wedlock, and taught him the proud and knightly love of which the minstrels of Spain had sung. He sighed--and still gazing on Nina, approached her, almost reverentially,—he knelt and kissed the hem of her robe. “Lady,” he said, “I would I could believe that you have altogether read my nature aright, but I were indeed lost to all honour, and unworthy of gentle birth, if I still harboured a single thought against the peace and virtue of one like thee. Sweet heroine”—he continued—“so lovely, yet so pure—so haughty, and yet so soft—thou hast opened to me the brightest page these eyes have ever scanned in the blotted volume of mankind. Mayest thou have such happiness as life can give; but souls such as thine make their nest like the eagle, upon rocks and amidst the storms. Fear me no more—think of me no more—unless hereafter, when thou hearest men speak of Giles D’Albornoz, thou mayest say in thine own heart,”—and here the Cardinal’s lip curled with scorn—“he did not renounce every feeling worthy of

a man, when Ambition and Fate endued him with the surplice of the priest."

The Spaniard was gone before Nina could reply.

BOOK VIII.

THE GRAND COMPANY.

“Montreal—nourrissoit de plus vastes projets . . . il donnoit à sa compagnie un gouvernement régulier . . . Par cette discipline il faisoit regner l’abondance dans son camp, les gens de guerre ne parloient, en Italie, que des richesses qu’on acquéroit à son service.

SISMONDI HIST. DES REPUBLIQUES ITALIENNES,
tom. vi. c. xlii.

BOOK VIII.

CHAP. I.

THE ENCAMPMENT.

It was a most lovely day, in the very glow and meridian of an Italian summer, when a small band of horsemen was seen winding a hill which commanded one of the fairest landscapes of Tuscany. At their head was a cavalier in a complete suit of chain armour, the links of which were so fine, that they resembled a delicate and curious net work, but so strongly compacted, that they would have resisted spear or sword no less effectually than the heaviest corse-

let, while adapting themselves exactly and with ease to every movement of the light and graceful shape of the rider. On his head he wore a hat of dark green velvet shaded by long plumes, while of two squires behind, the one bore his helmet and lance, the other led a strong war-horse, completely cased in plates of mail, which seemed, however, scarcely to encumber its proud and agile paces. The countenance of the cavalier was comely, but strongly marked, and darkened by long exposure to the suns of many climes to a deep bronze hue: a few raven ringlets escaped from beneath his hat down a cheek closely shaven. The expression of his features was grave and composed even to sadness; nor could all the loveliness of the unrivalled scene before him, dispel the quiet and settled melancholy of his eyes. Besides the squires, ten horsemen armed *cap-à-pie*, attended the knight; and the low and murmured conversation they carried on at intervals, as well as their long fair hair, large stature, thick short beards, and the studied and accurate equipment of their arms and steeds, bespoke them of a

hardier and more warlike race than the children of the south. The cavalcade was closed with two men almost of gigantic height, each bearing a banner richly decorated, wherein was wrought a column, with the inscription, "ALONE AMIDST RUINS." Fair indeed was the prospect which with every step expanded yet more widely its various beauty. Right before, stretched a long vale, now covered with green woodlands glittering in the yellow sunlight, now opening into narrow plains bordered by hillocks, from whose mosses of all hues grew fantastic and odorous shrubs; while winding amidst them, a broad and silver stream broke into light at frequent intervals, snatched by wood and hillock from the eye, only to steal upon it again, in sudden and bright surprise: the opposite slope of gentle mountains, as well as that which the horsemen now descended, was covered with vineyards, trained in allies and arcades. And the clustering grape laughed from every leafy and glossy covert, as gaily as when the Fauns held a holiday in the shade. The eye of the cavalier roved listlessly over this enchanting

prospect, sleeping in the rosiest light of a Tuscan heaven, and then became fixed with a more earnest attention on the gray and frowning walls of a distant castle, which, high upon the steepest of the opposite mountains, overlooked the valley.

“Behold,” he muttered to himself, “how every Eden in Italy hath its curse! Wherever the land smiles fairest, be sure to find the brigand’s tent and the tyrant’s castle!”

Scarce had these thoughts passed his mind. ere the shrill and sudden blast of a bugle that sounded close amongst the vineyards by the side of the path startled the whole group. The cavalcade halted abruptly. The leader made a gesture to the squire that led his war-horse. The noble and practised animal remained perfectly still, but champing its bit restlessly, and moving its quick ear to and fro, as aware of a coming danger,—while the squire, unencumbered by the heavy armour of the Germans, plunged into the thicket and disappeared. He returned in a few minutes, already heated and breathless.

“We must be on our guard,” he whispered,

“ I see the glimmer of steel through the vine leaves.”

“ Our ground is unhappily chosen,” said the knight, hastily bracing on his helmet and leaping on his charger; and waving his hand towards a broader space in the road, which would permit the horsemen more room to act in union, with his small band he made hastily to the spot—the armour of the soldiers rattling heavily as two by two they proceeded on.

The space to which the cavalier had pointed, was a green semicircle of several yards in extent, backed by tangled copses of brushwood sloping down to the vale below. They reached it in safety; they drew up breast to breast, in the form of a crescent: every visor closed, save that of the knight, who looked anxiously and keenly round the landscape.

“ Hast thou heard, Giulio,” he said, to his favourite squire, (the only Italian of the band,) “ whether any brigands have been seen lately in these parts?”

“ No, my Lord; on the contrary, I am told that every lance hath left the country to join

the Grand Company of Frà Moreale. The love of his pay and plunder has drawn away the mercenaries of every Tuscan signor."

Scarce had he spoke, before the bugle sounded again from nearly the same spot as before ; it was answered by a brief and martial note from the very rear of the horsemen. At the same moment from the thickets behind, broke the gleam of mail and spears. One after another—rank after rank—from the copse behind them, emerged men-at-arms, while suddenly from the vines in front, still greater numbers poured down with loud and fierce shouts.

"For God—for the Emperor—and for the Colonna !" cried the knight, closing his visor, and the little band, closely serried, the lance in every rest, broke upon the rush of the enemy in front. Some score borne to the ground by the charge, cleared a path for the horsemen, and without waiting the assault of the rest, the knight wheeled his charger, and led the way down the hill, almost at full gallop, despite the roughness of the descent: a flight of arrows dispatched after them fell idly on their iron mail.

“ If they have no horse,” cried the Knight, “ we are saved !”

And indeed the enemy seemed scarcely to think of pursuing them ; but (gathered on the brow of the hill) appeared contented to watch their flight.

Suddenly a curve in the road brought them before a broad and wide patch of waste land, which formed almost a level surface, interrupting the descent of the mountain. On the commencement of this waste—drawn up in still array—the sun-light broke on the breast-plates of a long line of horsemen, whom the sinuosities of the road had hitherto concealed from the Knight and his party.

The little troop halted abruptly—retreat—advance alike cut off;—gazing first at the foe before them, that remained still as a cloud, every eye was then turned towards the Knight.

“ An thou wouldst, my Lord,” said the leader of the Northmen, perceiving the irresolution of their chief, “ we will fight to the last. You are the only Italian I ever knew, whom I would willingly die for !”

This rude profession was received with a sympathetic murmur from the rest—and the soldiers drew closer around the Knight. “Nay, my brave fellows,” said the Colonna, lifting his visor, “it is not in so inglorious a field, after such various fortunes, and against such ignoble foes, that we are doomed to perish. If these be brigands, as we must suppose, we can yet purchase our way. If the troops of some signor, we are strangers to the feud in which he is engaged. Give me yon banner—I will ride on to them.

“Nay, my Lord,” said Giulio; “such marauders do not always spare a flag of truce. There is danger—”

“For that reason your leader braves it. Quick—”

The knight took the banner, and rode deliberately up to the horsemen. On approaching, his warlike eye could not but admire the perfect caparison of their arms, the strength and beauty of their steeds, and the steady discipline of their long and glittering line.

As he rode up, and his gorgeous banner gleamed in the noon-light, the soldiers saluted

him. It was a good omen, and he hailed it as such. "Fair sirs," said the Knight, "I come, at once herald and leader of the little band who have just escaped the unlooked for assault of armed men on yonder hill—and, claiming aid, as knight from knight, and soldier from soldier, I place my troop under the protection of your leader. Suffer me to see him."

"Sir Knight," answered one, who seemed the captain of the band, "sorry am I to detain one of your gallant bearing, and still more so, on recognising the device of one of the most potent Houses of Italy. But our orders are strict, and we must bring all armed men to the camp of our General."

"Long absent from my native land, I knew not," replied the Knight, "that there was war in Tuscany. Permit me to crave the name of the general whom you speak of, and that of the foe against whom ye march."

The Captain smiled slightly.

"Walter de Montreal is the General of the Great Company, and Florence his present foe."

“ We have fallen, then, into friendly, if fierce, hands,” replied the Knight, after a moment’s pause. “ To Sir Walter de Montreal I am known of old. Permit me to return to my companions, and acquaint them that if accident has made us prisoners, it is, at least, only to the most skilful warrior of his day that we are condemned to yield.”

The Italian then turned his horse to join his comrades.

“ A fair Knight and a bold presence,” said the Captain of the Companions to his neighbour, though I scarce think it is the party we are ordered to intercept. “ Praised be the Virgin, however, his men seem from the north. Them, perhaps, we may hope to enlist—”

The Knight now, with his comrades, rejoined the troop. And, on receiving their parole not to attempt escape, a detachment of thirty horsemen were despatched to conduct the prisoners to the encampment of the Great Company.

Turning from the main road, the Knight

found himself conducted into a narrow defile between the hills, which, succeeded by a gloomy track of wild forest-land, brought the party, at length, into a full and abrupt view of a wide plain, covered with the tents of what, for Italian warfare, was considered a mighty army. A stream, over which rude and hasty bridges had been formed from the neighbouring timber, alone separated the horsemen from the encampment.

“A noble sight!” said the captive Cavalier with enthusiasm, as he reined in his steed, and gazed upon those wild and warlike streets of canvass, traversing each other in vistas broad and regular.

One of the captains of the Great Company, who rode beside him, smiled complacently.

“There are few masters of the martial art that equal Frà Moreale,” said he; “and, wild, reckless, and gathered from all parts and all countries—from cavern and from market-place, from prison and from palace, as are his troops, he has reduced them already into a discipline which might shame even the soldiery of the Empire.”

The Knight made no reply; but, spurring his horse over one of the rugged bridges, soon found himself amidst the encampment. But that part at which he entered, little merited the praises bestowed upon the discipline of the army. A more unruly and disorderly array, the cavalier, accustomed to the stern regularity of English, French, and German discipline, thought he had never beheld: here and there, fierce, unshaven, half-naked brigands might be seen, driving before them the cattle, which they had just collected by predatory excursions. Sometimes a knot of dissolute women stood—chattering, scolding, gesticulating—collected round groups of wild shagged Northmen, who, despite the bright purity of the summer-noon, were already engaged in deep potations. Oaths, and laughter, and drunken merriment, and fierce brawl, rang from side to side, and ever and anon some hasty conflict with drawn knives, was begun and finished by the fiery and savage braves of Calabria or the Apennines, before the very eyes, and almost in the very path, of the troop. Tumblers and mountebanks and jug-

glers and jew pedlars, were exhibiting their tricks or their wares, at every interval, apparently well inured to the lawless and turbulent market in which they exercised their several callings. Despite the protection of the horsemen who accompanied them, the prisoners were not allowed to pass without molestation. Groups of urchins, squalid, fierce, and ragged, seemed to start from the ground, and surrounded their horses like swarms of bees, uttering the most discordant cries, and with the gestures of savages, rather demanding than beseeching money, which, when granted, seemed only to render them more insatiable. While, sometimes mingled with the rest, were seen the bright eyes and olive cheek, and half-pleading, half-laughing smile of girls, whose extreme youth scarce emerged from childhood, rendered doubly striking their utter and unredeemed abandonment.

“You did not exaggerate the decorum of the Grand Company!” cried the knight gravely to his new acquaintance.

“Signor,” replied the other; “you must not judge of the kernel by the shell. We are

scarcely yet arrived at the camp. These are the outskirts, occupied rather by the rabble than the soldiers. Twenty thousand men from the sink, it must be owned, of every town in Italy, follow the camp, to fight if necessary, but rather for plunder, and for forage :—such you now behold. Presently you will see those of another stamp.”

The knight's heart swelled high. “And to such men is Italy given up !” thought he. His reverie was broken by a loud burst of applause from some convivialists hard by. He turned, and under a long tent, and round a board covered with wine and viands, sate some thirty or forty bravoës. A ragged minstrel, or jongleur, with an immense beard and moustachios, was tuning, with no inconsiderable skill, a lute which had accompanied him in all his wanderings—and suddenly changing its note into a wild and warlike melody, he commenced in a loud and deep voice the following song :—

THE PRAISE OF THE GRAND COMPANY.

I.

Ho, dark one from the golden South—ho, fair one from
the North ;

Ho, coat of mail and spear of sheen—ho, wherefore
ride ye forth ?

‘ We come from mount, we come from cave, we come
across the sea,

In long array, in bright array—to Montreal’s Com-
paniè.’

Oh, the merry, merry band,

Light heart, and heavy hand—

Oh, the Lances of the Free !

II.

Ho, Princes of the castled height—ho, Burghers of the
town ;

Apulia’s strength, Romagna’s pride, and Tusca’s old
renown !

Why quail ye thus ? why pale ye thus ? what spectre
do ye see ?

‘ The blood red flag, and trampling march, of Mon-
treál’s Companiè.’

Oh, the sunshine of your life—

Oh, the thunders of your strife !

Wild Lances of the Free !

III.

Ho, scutcheons o'er the vaulted tomb where Norman
valour sleeps,
Why shake ye so? why quake ye so? what wind the
trophy sweeps?
'We shake without a breath—below the Dead are
stirred to see,
The Norman's fame revived again in Montreal's Com-
paniè.'

Who, since Roger won his crown,
Ever equalled your renown,
Brave Lances of the Free?

IV.

Ho, ye who seek to win a name, where deeds are
bravest done—
Ho, ye who wish to pile a heap, where gold is lightest
won;
Ho, ye who loathe the stagnant life, or shun the law's
decree,
Belt on the brand, and spur the steed to Montreal's
Companiè.

And the maid shall share her rest,
And the miser share his chest,
With the Lances of the Free!
The Free
The Free!
Oh! the Lances of the Free!

Then suddenly, as if inspired to a wilder flight by his own minstrelsy, the jongleur, sweeping his hand over the chords, broke forth into an air admirably expressive of the picture, that his words running into a rude, but lively and stirring doggrel, attempted to paint.

THE MARCH OF THE GRAND COMPANY.

“Tirà, tiralà—trumpet and drum—

Rising bright o’er the height of the mountain they
come!

German, and Hun, and the Islandrie,

Who routed the Frenchman at famed Cressiè,

When the rose changed its hue with the *fleur de lis*;

With the Roman, and Lombard, and Piedmontese,

And the dark-haired son of the southern seas.

Tirà, tiralà—more near and near!

Down the steep—see them sweep;—rank by rank they
appear!

With the cloud of the crowd hanging dark at their
rear—

Serried, and steadied, and orderliè,

Like the course—like the force—of a marching sea!

Open your gates, and out with your gold,

For the blood must be spilt, or the ransom be told!

Woe—Burghers—woe ! Behold them led
By the stoutest arm, and the wisest head,
With the snow white cross on the cloth of red ;—
With the eagle eye, and the lion port,
His barb for a throne, and his camp for a court :—
Sovereign and scourge of the land is he—
The kingly Knight of the Companiè !

Hurrah—hurrah—hurrah !

Hurrah for the army—hurrah for its Lord—
Hurrah for the gold that is got by the sword—

Hurrah—hurrah—hurrah !

For the Lances of the Free !

Shouted by the full chorus of those desperate boon companions, and caught up and re-echoed from side to side, near and far, as the familiar and well-known words of the burthen reached the ears of more distant groups or stragglers, the effect of this fierce and licentious minstrelsy was indescribable. It was impossible not to feel the zest which that daring life imparted to its daring followers, and even the gallant and stately knight who listened to it, reproved himself for an involuntary thrill of sympathy and pleasure.

He turned with some impatience and irrita-

tion to his companion, who had taken a part in the chorus, and said, "Sir—to the ears of an Italian noble, conscious of the miseries of his country, this ditty is not welcome. I pray you, let us proceed."

"I humbly crave your pardon, Signor," said the Free Companion; "but really so attractive is the life led by free lances, under *Frd Moreale*, that sometimes we forget the——; but pardon me—we will on."

A few moments more, and bounding over a narrow circumvallation, the party found themselves in a quarter, animated indeed, but of a wholly different character of animation. Long lines of armed men were drawn up on either side of a path, conducting to a large marquee, placed upon a little hillock, surmounted by a blue flag, and up this path armed soldiers were passing to and fro with great order, but with a pleased and complacent expression upon their swarthy features. Some that repaired to the marquee were bearing packets and bales upon their shoulders—those that returned seemed to have got rid of their burthens, but every now

and then, impatiently opening their hands, appeared counting and recounting to themselves the coins contained therein.

The knight looked inquiringly at his companion.

“It is the marquee of the merchants,” said the captain; “they have free admission to the camp, and their property and persons are rigidly respected. They purchase each soldier’s share of the plunder at fair prices, and each party is contented with the bargain.”

“It seems, then, that there is some kind of rude justice observed amongst you,” said the Knight.

“Rude ! Diavolo ! Not a town in Italy but would be glad of such even justice, and such impartial laws. Yonder lie the tents of the judges, appointed to try all offences of soldier against soldier. To the right, the tent with the golden ball contains the treasurer of the army. Frà Moreale incurs no arrears with his soldiery. All within is like the wheels of a machine ; but the machine itself, I allow, occasions disorder enough without.”

It was, indeed, by these means that the Knight of St. John had collected the best equipped, and the best contented force in Italy. Every day brought him recruits. Nothing was spoken of amongst the mercenaries of Italy but the wealth acquired in his service, and every warrior in the pay of Republic or of Tyrant, sighed for the lawless standard of *Frà Moreale*. Already had exaggerated tales of the fortunes to be made in the ranks of the Great Company passed the Alps; and, even now, the Knight, penetrating farther into the camp, beheld from many a tent the proud banners and armorial blazon of German nobility, and Gallic knight-hood.

“You see,” said the Free Companion, pointing to these insignia, “we are not without our different ranks in our wild city. And while we speak, many a golden spur is speeding hitherward from the North!”

All now in the quarter they had entered was still, and solemn; only afar came the mingled hum, or the sudden shout, of the pandemonium in the rear, mellowed by distance to a not un-

pleasing sound. An occasional soldier, crossing their path, stalked silently and stealthily to some neighbouring tent, and seemed scarcely to regard their approach.

“Behold! we are before the General’s pavilion,” said the free Lance.

Blazoned with purple and gold, the tent of Montreal lay a little apart from the rest. A brooklet from the stream they had crossed, murmured gratefully on the ear, and a tall and wide-spreading beech cast its shadow over the gorgeous canvass.

While his troop waited without, the Knight was conducted at once to the presence of the formidable adventurer.

CHAP. II.

ADRIAN ONCE MORE THE GUEST OF MONTREAL.

MONTREAL was sitting at the head of a table, surrounded by men, some military, some civil, whom he called his councillors, and with whom he apparently debated all his projects. These men, drawn from various cities, were intimately acquainted with the internal affairs of the several states to which they belonged. They could tell to a fraction the force of a Signor, the wealth of a merchant, the power of a mob. And thus, in his lawless camp, Montreal presided, not more as a general than a statesman. Such knowledge was invaluable to the chief of the Great Company. It enabled him to cal-

culate exactly the time to attack a foe, and the sum to demand for a suppression of hostilities. He knew what parties to deal with—where to importune—where to forbear. And it usually happened that by some secret intrigue, the appearance of Montreal's banner before the walls of a city was the signal for some sedition, or some broil within. It may be that he thus also promoted an ulterior as well as his present policy.

The divan were in full consultation when an officer entered, and whispered a few words in Montreal's ear. His eyes brightened. "Admit him," he said hastily. "Messires," he added to his councillors, rubbing his hands, "I think our net has caught our bird. Let us see."

At this moment the drapery was lifted and the Knight admitted

"How !" muttered Montreal, changing colour, and in evident disappointment. "Am I ever to be thus balked?"

"Sir Walter de Montreal," said the prisoner, "I am once more your guest—in these altered features you perhaps scarcely recognise Adrian di Castello."

“Pardon me, noble Signor,” said Montreal rising with great courtesy; “the mistake of my varlets disturbed my recollection for a moment—I rejoice once more to press a hand that has won so many laurels since last we parted. Your renown has been grateful to my ears. Ho!” continued the chieftain clapping his hands, “see to the refreshment and repose of this noble cavalier and his attendants. Lord Adrian, I will join you presently,”

Adrian withdrew. Montreal, forgetful of his councillors, traversed his tent with hasty strides—then summoning the officer who had admitted Adrian, he said, “Count Landau still keeps the pass?”

“Yes, General!”

“Hie thee fast back then—the ambuscade must tarry till nightfall. We have trapped the wrong fox.”

The officer departed, and shortly afterwards Montreal broke up the divan. He sought Adrian, who was lodged in a tent beside his own.

“My Lord,” said Montreal, “it is true, that my men had orders to stop every one on

the roads towards Florence. I am at war with that city. Yet I expected a very different prisoner from you. Need I add, that you and your men are free?"

"I accept the courtesy, noble Montreal, as frankly as it is rendered. May I hope hereafter to repay it? Meanwhile permit me, without any disrespect, to say that had I learned the Grand Company was in this direction, I should have altered my course. I had heard that your arms were bent (somewhat to my mind more nobly) against Malatesta, the tyrant of Rimini!"

"They were so. He *was* my foe. He *is* my tributary. We conquered him. He paid us the price of his liberty. We marched by Asciano upon Sienna. For sixteen thousand florins we spared that city, and we now hang like a thunderbolt over Florence, which dared to send her puny aid to the defence of Rimini. Our marches are forced and rapid, and our camp in this plain but just pitched."

"I hear that the Grand Company is allied with Albornoz, and that its general is secretly the soldier of the church. Is it so?"

“Ay—Albornoz and I understand one another,” replied Montreal carelessly, “and not the less so, that we have a mutual foe—whom both are sworn to crush, in Visconti—the Archbishop of Milan.”

“Visconti! the most potent of the Italian princes. That he has justly incurred the wrath of the church I know—and I can readily understand that Innocent has revoked the purchased pardon which the intrigues of the Archbishop purchased from Clement VI. But I see not so clearly why Montreal should willingly provoke so dark and terrible a foe.”

Montreal smiled sternly. “Know you not,” he said, “the vast ambition of that Visconti? By the holy sepulchre, he is precisely the enemy my soul leaps to meet. He has a genius worthy to cope with Montreal’s. I have made myself master of his secret plans—they are gigantic! In a word, the Archbishop designs the conquest of all Italy. His enormous wealth purchases the corrupt—his dark sagacity ensnares the credulous—his daring valour awes the weak. Every enemy he humbles—every ally he enslaves. This

is precisely the Prince whose progress Walter de Montreal must arrest. For this, (he said in a whisper as to himself,) is precisely the Prince who, if suffered to extend his power, will frustrate the plans and break the force of Walter de Montreal."

Adrian was silent, and for the first time a suspicion of the real nature of the Provençal's designs crossed his breast.

"But give me, noble Montreal," resumed the Colonna—"give me, if your knowledge serves, as no doubt it does, give me the latest tidings of my native city. I am Roman, and Rome is ever in my thoughts."

"And well she may," replied Montreal quickly. "Thou knowest that Alborno, as Legate of the Pontiff, led the army of the church into the Papal Territories. He took with him Cola di Rienzi. Arrived at Monte Fiascone, crowds of Romans of all ranks hastened thither to render homage to the Tribune. The Legate was forgotten in the popularity of his companion. Whether or no Alborno grew jealous—for he is proud as Lucifer—of the respect paid to the Tribune,

or whether he feared the restoration of his power, I know not. But he detained him in his camp, and refused to yield him to all the solicitations and all the deputations of the Romans. Artfully, however, he fulfilled one of the real objects of Rienzi's release. Through his means he formally regained the allegiance of Rome to the church, and by the attraction of his presence, swelled his camp with Roman recruits. Marching to Viterbo, Rienzi distinguished himself greatly in deeds of arms against the tyrant,* John di Vico. Nay, he fought as one worthy of belonging to the Grand Company. This increased the zeal of the Romans; and the city disgorged half its inhabitants to attend the person of the bold Tribune. To the entreaties of these worthy citizens—(perhaps the very men who had before shut up their darling in St. Angelo)—the crafty Legate merely replied, ‘Arm against John di Vico—conquer the tyrants of the Territory—re-establish the patrimony of St. Peter, and Rienzi shall then be proclaimed Senator, and return to Rome.’

* Vit. di. Col. Rienzi.

“ These words inspired the Romans with so great a zeal that they willingly lent their aid to the Legate. Aquapendente, Bolzena yielded, John di Vico was half reduced and half terrified into submission—and Gabrielli, the tyrant of Agobbio, has since succumbed. The glory is to the Cardinal—but the merit with Rienzi.”

“ And now ?”

“ Albornoz continued to entertain the Senator-Tribune with great splendour and fair words, but not a word about restoring him to Rome. Wearied with this suspense, I have learnt by secret intelligence, that Rienzi has left the camp, and betaken himself with few attendants to Florence, where he has friends, who will provide him with arms and money to enter Rome.”

“ Ah then ! now I guess,” said Adrian, with a half smile ; “ for whom I was mistaken !”

Montreal blushed slightly. “ Fairly conjectured !” said he.

“ Meanwhile, at Rome,” continued the Provençal—“ at Rome, your worthy House, and that

of the Orsini, being elected to the supreme power, quarrelled among themselves, and could not keep it. Francesco Baroncelli, a new demagogue, a humble imitator of Rienzi, rose upon the ruins of the peace broken by the nobles, obtained the title of Tribune, and carried about the very insignia used by his predecessor. But less wise than Rienzi, he took the antipapal party. And the legate was thus enabled to play the papal demagogue against the usurper. Baroncelli was a weak man, his sons committed every excess in mimicry of the high-born tyrants of Padua and Milan. Virgins violated and matrons dishonoured, somewhat contrasted the solemn and majestic decorum of Rienzi's rule;—in fine, Baroncelli fell massacred by the people. And now if you ask what rules Rome, I answer, 'It is the hope of Rienzi.' ”

“ A strange man, and various fortunes. What will be the end of both !”

“ Swift murder to the first, and eternal fame to the last,” answered Montreal, calmly. “ Rienzi will be restored, that brave phoenix will wing its way through storm and cloud to its own

funeral pyre ; I foresee, I compassionate, I admire.—And then,” added Montreal, “I look *beyond !*”

“ But wherefore feel you so certain that if restored, Rienzi must fall ? ”

“ Is it not clear to every eye, save his, that ambition blinds ? How can mortal genius, however great, rule that most depraved people by popular means ? The Barons—you know the indomitable ferocity of your Roman order—wedded to abuse, and loathing every semblance to law ; the Barons, humbled for a moment, will watch their occasion, and rise. The people will again desert. Or else, grown wise in one respect by experience, the new Senator will see that popular favour has a loud voice, but a recreant arm. He will, like the Barons, surround himself by foreign swords. A detachment from the Grand Company will be his courtiers ; they will be his masters ! to pay them the people must be taxed. Then the idol is execrated. No Italian hand can govern these hardy demons of the north ; they will mutiny and fall away. A new

demagogue will lead on the people, and Rienzi will be the victim. Mark my prophecy !”

“ And then, the ‘*beyond*’ to which you look !”

“ Utter prostration of Rome—for new and long ages ; God makes not two Rienzis : *or*” said Montreal, proudly, “ the infusion of a new life into the worn-out and diseased frame,—the foundation of a new dynasty. Verily, when I look around me, I believe that the Ruler of nations designs the restoration of the South by the irruptions of the North ; and that out of the old Franc and Germanic race will be built up the thrones of the Future world !”

As Montreal thus spoke, leaning on his great war-sword, with his fair and heroic features, so different, in their frank, bold, fearless expression, from the dark and wily intellect that characterizes the lineaments of the South—eloquent at once with enthusiasm and thought—he might have seemed no unfitting representative of the genius of that northern chivalry of which he spake. And Adrian half fancied that he saw before him one of the old gothic scourges of the Western World.

Their conversation was here interrupted by the sound of a trumpet, and presently an officer entering, announced the arrival of ambassadors from Florence.

“Again you must pardon me, noble Adrian,” said Montreal, “and let me claim you as my guest at least for to-night. Here you may rest secure, and on parting, my men shall attend you to the frontiers of whatsoever territory you design to visit.”

Adrian, not sorry to see more of a man so celebrated, accepted the invitation.

Left alone, he leant his head upon his hand, and soon became lost in his reflections.

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CHAP. III.

FAITHFUL AND ILL-FATED LOVE—THE ASPIRATIONS SURVIVE THE AFFECTIONS.

SINCE that fearful hour in which Adrian Colonna had gazed upon the lifeless form of his adored Irene, the young Roman had undergone the usual vicissitudes of a wandering and adventurous life in those exciting times. His country seemed no longer dear to him. His very rank precluded him from the post he once aspired to take in restoring the liberties of Rome; and he felt that if ever such a revolution could be consummated, it was reserved for one in whose birth and habits the people could feel sympathy and kindred, and who could lift his hand in their behalf without becoming the apos-

tate of his order, and the judge of his own House. He had travelled through various courts, and served with renown in various fields. Beloved and honoured wheresoever he fixed a temporary home—no change of scene had removed his melancholy—no new ties had chased away the memory of the Lost. In that æra of passionate and poetical romance which Petrarch represented rather than created, love had already begun to assume a more tender and sacred character than it had hitherto known—it had gradually imbibed the divine spirit which it derives from Christianity, and which associates its sorrows on earth with the visions and hopes of heaven. To him who relies upon immortality, fidelity to the dead is easy, because death cannot extinguish hope; and the soul of the mourner is already half in the world to come. It is an age which desponds of a future life—representing death as an eternal separation—in which men may grieve indeed for the dead, but hasten to reconcile themselves to the living. For true is the old aphorism, that love exists not without hope. And all that ro-

mantic worship which the Hermit of Vaucluse felt, or feigned, for Laura, found its temple in the desolate heart of Adrian Colonna. He was emphatically the Lover of *his time*! Often as, in his pilgrimage from land to land, he passed the walls of some quiet and lonely convent, he seriously meditated the solemn vows, and internally resolved that the cloister at least should receive his maturer age. The absence of years had, however, in some degree restored the dimmed and shattered affection for his fatherland, and he desired once more to behold the city in which he had first beheld Irene. "Perhaps," he thought, "time may have wrought some unlooked-for change; and I may yet assist to restore my country."

But with this lingering patriotism no ambition was mingled. In that heated stage of action, in which the desire of power seemed to stir through every breast, and Italy had become the El Dorado of wealth or the Utopia of empire, to thousands of valiant arms and plotting minds, there was at least one breast that felt the true philosophy of the

Hermit. Adrian's nature, though gallant and masculine, was singularly imbued with that elegance of temperament, which recoils from rude contact, and to which a lettered and cultivated indolence is the supremest luxury. His education, his experience, and his intellect, had placed him far in advance of his age, and he looked with a high contempt at the coarse villainies and base tricks by which Italian ambition sought its road to power. The rise and fall of Rienzi, who, whatever his failings, was at least the purest and most honourable of the self-raised princes of the age, had conspired to make him despond of the success of noble, as he recoiled from that of selfish, aspirations. And the dreamy melancholy which resulted from his ill-starred love yet more tended to wean him from the stale and hacknied pursuits of the world. His character was full of beauty and of poetry—not the less so in that it found not a vent for its emotions in the actual occupation of the poet! Pent within, those emotions diffused themselves over all his thoughts and coloured his whole soul. Sometimes in the blessed abstraction of

his visions, he pictured to himself the lot he might have chosen had Irene lived, and fate united them—far from the turbulent and vulgar roar of Rome—but amidst some yet unpolluted solitude of the bright Italian soil. Before his eye there rose the lovely landscape—the palace by the borders of the waveless lake—the vineyards in the valley—the dark forests waving from the hill—and that home, the resort and refuge of all the minstrelsy and love of Italy, brightened by the “*Lampeggior dell ’angelico riso*,” that makes a paradise in the face we love. Often, seduced by such dreams to complete oblivion of his loss, the young wanderer started from the ideal bliss, to behold around him the solitary waste of way—or the moonlit tents of war—or, worse than all, the crowds and revels of a foreign court.

Whether or not such fancies now for a moment allured his meditations, conjured up perhaps by the name of Irene’s brother, which never sounded in his ears but to awaken ten thousand associations, the Colonna remained thoughtful and absorbed, until he was disturbed

by his own squire, who, accompanied by Montreal's servitors, ushered in his solitary but ample repast. Flasks of the richest Florentine wines—viands prepared with all the art which, alas, Italy has now lost!—goblets and salvers of gold and silver prodigally wrought with barbaric gems—attested the princely luxury which reigned in the camp of the Grand Company. But Adrian saw in all but the spoliation of his degraded country, and felt the splendour almost as an insult. His lonely meal soon concluded, he became impatient of the monotony of his tent; and, tempted by the cool air of the descending eve, sauntered carelessly forth. He bent his steps by the side of the brooklet that curved snake-like and sparkling by Montreal's tent; and finding a spot somewhat solitary and apart from the warlike tenements around, flung himself by the margin of the stream.

The last rays of the sun quivered on the wave that danced musically over its stony bed; and amidst a little copse on the opposite bank broke the brief and momentary song of such of the bolder habitants of that purple air as the din of

the camp had not scared from their green retreat. The clouds lay motionless to the west, in that sky so darkly and intensely blue, never seen but over the landscapes that a Claude or a Rosa loved to paint; and dim and delicious rose-hues gathered over the grey peaks of the distant Apennines. From afar floated the hum of the camp, broken by the neigh of returning steeds—the blast of an occasional bugle—and at regular intervals by the armed tramp of the neighbouring sentry. And opposite to the left of the copse—upon a rising ground, matted with reeds, moss, and waving shrubs—were the ruins of some old Etruscan wall or building, whose name had perished, whose very uses were unknown.

The scene was so calm and lovely, as Adrian gazed upon it, that it was scarcely possible to imagine it at that very hour the haunt of fierce and banded robbers, among most of whom the very soul of man was embruted, and to whom murder or rapine made the habitual occupation of life.

Still buried in his reveries, and carelessly

dropping stones into the noisy rivulet, Adrian was aroused by the sound of steps.

“ A fair spot to listen to the lute and the ballads of Provence,” said the voice of Montreal, as the Knight of St. John threw himself on the turf beside the young Colonna.

“ You retain, then, your ancient love of your national melodies,” said Adrian.

“ Ay, I have not yet survived *all* my youth,” answered Montreal, with a slight sigh. “ But somehow or other, the strains that once pleased my fancy now go too directly to my heart. So though I still welcome jongleur and minstrel, I bid them sing their *newest* conceits. I don’t wish ever again to hear the poetry I heard when *I was young* !”

“ Pardon me,” said Adrian, with great interest, “ but fain would I have dared—but a secret apprehension prevented me hitherto—fain would I have dared to question you of that lovely lady, with whom, seven years ago, we gazed at moonlight upon the odorous orange-groves and rosy waters of Terracina.”

Montreal turned away his face ; he laid his hand on Adrian's arm, and murmured in a deep and hoarse tone—" I am alone now !"

Adrian pressed his hand in silence. He felt no light shock at thus learning the death of one so gentle, so lovely, and so ill-fated.

" The vows of my knighthood," continued Montreal, " which precluded Adeline the rights of wedlock—the shame of her house—the angry grief of her mother—the wild vicissitudes of my life, so exposed to peril—the loss of her son—all preyed silently on her frame. She did not die—(die is too harsh a word !)—but she drooped away, and glided into heaven. Even as on a summer's morn some soft dream fleets across us, growing less and less distinct, until it fades, as it were, into light, and we awaken—so faded Adeline's parting spirit, till the daylight of God broke upon it."

Montreal paused a moment, and then resumed—" These thoughts make the boldest of us weak sometimes, and we Provençals are foolish in these matters !—God's wot, she was very dear to me !"

The Knight bent down and crossed himself devoutly, his lips muttered a prayer: Strange as it may seem to our more enlightened age, so martial a garb did morality then wear, that this man, at whose word towns had blazed and torrents of blood had flowed, neither adjudged himself, nor was adjudged by the majority of his cotemporaries, a criminal. His order, half monastic, half warlike, was emblematic of himself. He trampled upon man, yet humbled himself to God, nor had all his acquaintance with the refining scepticism of Italy shaken the sturdy and simple faith of the bold Provençal. So far from recognising any want of harmony between his calling and his creed, he held (like a true Northman) that man no true chevalier who was not as devout to the Cross as relentless with the sword.

“And you have no child save the one you lost?” asked Adrian, when he observed the wonted composure of Montreal once more returning.

“None!” said Montreal, as his brow again darkened. “No love-begotten heir of mine will

succeed to the fortunes I trust yet to build. Never on earth shall I see upon the face of her child the likeness of Adeline ! yet, at Avignon, I saw a boy I would have claimed—for me—thought she must have looked her soul into his eyes, they were so like her's. Well, well; the Provence tree hath other branches; and some unborn nephew must be—what?—the stars have not yet decided ! But ambition is now the only thing in the world left me to love.”

‘ So differently operates the same misfortune upon different characters,’ thought the Colonna. ‘ To me crowns became valueless when I could no longer dream of placing them on Irene’s brow !’

The similarity of their fates, however, attracted Adrian strongly towards his host, and the two Knights conversed together with more friendship and unreserve than they had hitherto done. At length Montreal said, “ By the way, I have not inquired your destination.”

“ I am bound to Rome,” said Adrian ; “ and the intelligence I have learnt from you incites

me thitherward yet more eagerly. If Rienzi return I may mediate successfully, perchance, between the Tribune-Senator and the nobles ; and if I find my cousin, young Stefanello, now the head of our house, more tractable than his sires, I shall not despair of conciliating the less powerful barons. Rome wants repose ; and who ever governs, if he govern but with justice, ought to be supported both by prince and plebeian !”

Montreal listened with great attention, and then muttered to himself, “No, it cannot be !” He mused a little while, shading his brow with his hand, before he said aloud, “To Rome you are bound. Well, we shall meet soon amidst its ruins. Know, by the way, that my object here is already won : these Florentine merchants have acceded to my terms ; they have purchased a two years’ peace ; to-morrow the camp breaks up, and the Grand Company march to Lombardy—there, if my schemes prosper, and the Venetians pay my price, I league the rascals (under Landau, my Lieutenant,) with the Sea City, in defiance of the Visconti, and shall pass

my autumn in peace, amidst the pomps of Rome."

"Sir Walter de Montreal," said Adrian, "your frankness perhaps makes me presumptuous; but when I hear you talk, like a huxtering trader, of selling alike your friendship and your forbearance, I ask myself, 'Is this the great Knight of St. John; and have men spoken of him fairly, when they assert the sole stain on his laurels to be his avarice?'"

Montreal bit his lip; nevertheless, he answered calmly, "My frankness has brought its own penance, Lord Adrian. However, I cannot wholly leave so honoured a guest under an impression that I feel to be plausible, but not just. No, brave Colonna; report wrongs me. I value Gold, for Gold is the Architect of Power! It fills the camp—it storms the city—it buys the market-place—it raises the palace—it founds the throne. I value Gold,—it is the means necessary to my end!"

"And that end—"

"Is—no matter what," said the Knight coldly. "Let us to our tents, the dews fall

heavily, and the *malaria* floats over these houseless wastes."

The pair rose, yet, fascinated by the beauty of the hour, they lingered for a moment by the brook. The earliest stars shone over its crisp-ing wavelets, and a delicious breeze murmured gently amidst the glossy herbage.

"Thus gazing," said Montreal softly, "we reverse the old Medusan fable the poets tell us of, and look and muse ourselves *out* of stone. A little while, and it was the *sunlight* that gilded the wave—it now shines as brightly and glides as gaily beneath the *stars*; even so rolls the stream of time, one luminary succeeds the other, equally welcomed—equally illumining—equally evanescent!—You see the poetry of Provence still lives beneath my mail!"

Adrian early sought his couch; but his own thoughts and the sounds of loud mirth that broke from Montreal's tent where the chief feasted the captains of his band, a revel from which he had the delicacy to excuse the Roman noble, kept him long awake; and he had scarcely fallen into an unquiet slumber, when yet more

discordant sounds again invaded his repose. At the earliest dawn the wide armament was astir—the creaking of cordage—the tramp of men—loud orders and louder oaths—the slow rolling of baggage-wains—and the clank of the armourers, announced the removal of the camp, and the approaching departure of the Grand Company !

Ere Adrian was yet attired, Montreal entered his tent.

“ I have appointed,” he said, “ five score lances, under a trusty leader, to accompany you, noble Adrian, to the borders of Romagna; they wait your leisure. In another hour I depart; the on-guard are already in motion.”

Adrian would fain have declined the proffered escort; but he saw that it would only offend the pride of the chief, who soon retired. Hastily Adrian endued his arms—the air of the fresh morning, and the glad sun lifting himself gorgeously from the hills, revived his wearied spirit. He repaired to Montreal’s tent, and found him alone, with the implements of writing

before him, and a triumphant smile upon his countenance.

“ Fortune showers new favours on me !” he said gaily. “ Yesterday the Florentines spared me the trouble of a siege ; and to-day (even since I last saw you—a few minutes since) puts your new Senator of Rome into my power.”

“ How ! have your bands then arrested Rienzi ?”

“ Not so—better still ! The Tribune changed his plan, and repaired to Perugia, where my brothers now abide—sought them—they have supplied him with money, and soldiers enough to brave the perils of the way, and to defy the swords of the Barons. So writes my good brother Arimbald, a man of letters, whom the Tribune thinks rightly he has decoyed with old tales of Roman greatness, and mighty promises of grateful advancement. You find me hastily expressing my content at the arrangement. My brothers themselves will accompany the Senator-Tribune to the walls of the Capitol.”

“ Still, I see not how this places Rienzi in your power.”

“ No ! His soldiers are my creatures—his comrades my brothers—his creditor myself ! Let him rule Rome then—the time soon comes when the Vice-Regent must yield to—”

“ The Chief of the Grand Company,” interrupted Adrian with a shudder, which the bold Montreal was too engrossed with the unconcealed excitement of his own thoughts to notice. “ No, Knight of Provence, basely have we succumbed to domestic tyrants : but never, I trust, shall Romans be so vile as to wear the yoke of a foreign usurper.”

Montreal looked hard at Adrian, and smiled sternly.

“ You mistake me,” said he ; “ and it will be time enough for you to play the Brutus when I assume the Cæsar. Meanwhile we are but host and guest. Let us change the theme.”

Nevertheless this, their latter, conference, threw a chill over both during the short time the Knights remained together, and they parted with a formality which was ill-suited to their

friendly intercourse of the night before. Montreal felt he had incautiously revealed himself, but caution was no part of his character, whenever he found himself at the head of an army, and at the full tide of fortune; and at that moment, so confident was he of the success of his wildest schemes, that he recked little whom he offended,—or whom alarmed.

Slowly, with his strange and ferocious escort, Adrian renewed his way. Winding up a steep ascent that led from the plain,—when he reached the summit, the curve in the road showed him the whole army on its march;—the gonfalons waving—the armour flashing in the sun, line after line, like a river of steel, and the whole plain bristling with the array of that moving war;—while the solemn tread of the armed thousands, fell subdued and stifled at times by martial and exulting music. As they swept on, Adrian descried at length the stately and towering form of Montreal upon a black charger, distinguished even at that distance from the rest, not more by his gorgeous armour than his lofty stature. So swept he on in the pride of his

array—in the flush of his hopes—the head of a mighty armament—the terror of Italy—the hero that was—the monarch that might be !

Three little months afterwards, and six feet of ground sufficed for all that greatness !

BOOK IX.

THE RETURN.

“ Allora la sua venuta fu a Roma Sentita, Romani si apparecchiavano, a riceverlo con letizia, furo fatti archi trionfali,” &c. &c.

VITA DI COLA DI RIENZI, lib. ii. c. xvii.

CHAP. I.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRANCE.

ALL Rome was astir!—from St. Angelo to the Capitol, windows, balconies, roofs, were crowded with animated thousands. Only here and there, in the sullen quarters of the Colonna, the Orsini, and the Savelli, reigned a death-like solitude and a dreary gloom. In those fortifications, rather than streets, was not even heard the accustomed tread of the barbarian sentinel. The gates closed—the casements barred—the grim silence around—attested the absence of the Barons. They had left the city so soon as they had learnt of the certain approach of Rienzi. In the villages and castles of the Campagna,

surrounded by their mercenaries, they awaited the hour when the people, weary of their idol, should welcome back even these ferocious Iconoclasts.

With these exceptions, all Rome was astir ! Triumphal arches of drapery, wrought with gold and silver, raised at every principal vista, were inscribed with mottos of welcome and rejoicing. At frequent intervals stood youths and maidens with baskets of flowers and laurels. High above the assembled multitudes—from the proud tower of Hadrian—from the turrets of the Capitol—from the spires of the sacred buildings dedicated to Apostle and to Saint—floated banners as for a victory. Rome once more opened her arms to receive her Tribune !

Mingled with the crowd—disguised by his large mantle—hidden by the pressure of the throng—his person, indeed, forgotten by most—and, in the confusion of the moment, heeded by none—stood Adrian Colonna ! He had not been able to conquer his interest for the brother of Irene. Solitary amidst his fellow-citizens, he stood—the only one of the proud race of Colonna who

witnessed the triumph of the darling of the people.

“They say he has grown large in his prison,” said one of the bystanders,—“he was lean enough when he came by daybreak out of the Church of St. Angelo!”

“Ay,” said another, a little man with a shrewd, restless eye,—“they say truly; I saw him take leave of the Legate.”

Every eye was turned to the last speaker; he became at once a personage of importance. “Yes,” continued the little man with an elated and pompous air,—“as soon, d’ye see, as he had prevailed on Messere Brettone, and Messere Arimbaldò, the brothers of Frà Moreale, to accompany him from Perugia to Monte Fiascone, he went at once to the Legate D’Albornoz, who was standing in the open air conversing with his captains. A crowd followed. I was one of them; and the Tribune nodded at me—ay, that did he!—and so, with his scarlet cloak and his scarlet cap, he faced the proud Cardinal with a pride greater than his own. ‘Though your Eminence,’ said he, ‘accords me neither money

nor arms, to meet the dangers of the road, and brave the ambush of the Barons, I am prepared to depart. Senator of Rome, his Holiness hath made me: according to custom, I demand your Eminence forthwith to confirm the rank.' I would you could have seen how the proud Spaniard stared, and blushed, and frowned; but he bit his lip, and said little."

"And confirmed Rienzi Senator?"

"Yes; and blessed him, and bade him depart."

"Senator!" said a stalwart but grey-haired giant with folded arms:—"I like not a title that has been borne by a patrician. I fear me, in the new title he will forget the old."

"Fie, Cecco del Vecchio, you were always a grumbler!" said a merchant of cloth, whose commodity the ceremonial had put in great request;—"fie!—for my part, I think Senator a less new-fangled title than Tribune. I hope there will be feasting enow, at last. Rome has been long dull. *Deh!*—a bad time for trade, I warrant me!"

The artizan grinned scornfully. He was one

of those who distinguished between the middle class and the working, and he loathed a merchant as much as he did a noble. "The day wears," said the little man; "he must be here anon. The Senator's lady, and all his train, have gone forth to meet him these two hours."

Scarce were these words uttered, when the crowd to the right swayed restlessly; and presently a horseman rode rapidly through the street. "Way there—keep back!—way!—make way for the Most Illustrious the Senator of Rome!"

The crowd became hushed—then murmuring—then hushed again. From balcony and casement stretched the neck of every gazer. The tramp of steeds was heard at a distance—the sound of clarion and trumpet;—then gleaming through the distant curve of the streets, was seen the wave of the gonfalons—then the glitter of spears—and then from the whole multitude, as of one voice, arose the shout,—“He comes! he comes!”

Adrian shrunk yet more backward amongst the throng; and leaning against the walls of one

of the houses, contemplated the approaching pageant.

First came, six abreast, the procession of Roman horsemen who had gone forth to meet the Senator, bearing boughs of olive in their hands: each hundred preceded by banners, inscribed with the words, "Liberty and Peace restored." As these passed the group by Adrian, each more popular citizen of the cavalcade was recognised and received with loud shouts. By the garb and equipment of the horsemen, Adrian saw that they belonged chiefly to the traders of Rome, a race who, he well-knew, unless strangely altered, valued liberty only as a commercial speculation.—"A vain support these," thought the Colonna;—"what next?" On, then, came in glittering armour the German mercenaries, hired by the gold of the Brothers of Provence, in number two hundred and fifty, and previously in the pay of Malatesta of Rimini;—tall, stern, sedate, disciplined,—eyeing the crowd, with a look, half of barbarian wonder, half of insolent disdain. No shout of gratulation welcomed these sturdy

strangers ; it was evident that their aspect cast a chill over the assembly.

“Shame !” growled Cecco del Vecchio audibly. “Has the people’s friend need of the swords which guard an Orsini or a Malatesta?—shame !”

No voice this time silenced the huge malcontent.

“His only real defence against the Barons,” thought Adrian, “if he pay them well ! But their number is not sufficient !”

Next came two hundred fantassins, or foot soldiers, of Tuscany, with the corslets and arms of the heavy-armed soldiery—a gallant company, and whose cheerful looks and familiar bearing appeared to sympathize with the crowd. And in truth they did so,—for they were Tuscans, and therefore lovers of freedom. In them, too, the Romans seemed to recognise natural and legitimate allies,—and there was a general “*Viva*” for the brave Tuscans !

“Poor defence !” thought the more sagacious Colonna :—“the Barons can awe, and the mob corrupt them.”

Next came a file of trumpeters and standard-bearers;—and now the sound of the music was drowned by shouts, which seemed to rise simultaneously as from every quarter of the city;—“Rienzi ! Rienzi !—welcome, welcome ! Liberty and Rienzi ! Rienzi and the good State !” Flowers dropped on his path, kerchiefs and banners waved from every house ;—tears might be seen coursing, unheeded, down bearded cheeks ;—youth and age were kneeling together, with uplifted hands, invoking blessings on the head of the Restored. On he came, the Senator-Tribune—‘*the Phoenix to his pyre !*’

Robed in crimson, that literally blazed with gold, his proud head bared in the sun, and bending to the saddle bow, Rienzi passed slowly through the throng. Not in the flush of that hour were visible, on his glorious countenance, the signs of disease and care : the very enlargement of his proportions gave a greater majesty to his mien. Hope sparkled in his eye—triumph and empire sat upon his brow. The crowd could not contain themselves ; they pressed forward, each upon each, anxious to catch the

glance of his eye, to touch the hem of his robe. He himself was deeply affected by their joy. He halted; with faltering and broken words, he attempted to address them. "I am repaid," he said,—“repaid for all;—may I live to make you happy!”

The crowd parted again—the Senator moved on—again the crowd closed in. Behind the Tribune, to their excited imagination seemed to move the very goddess of ancient Rome.

Upon a steed, caparisoned with cloth of gold;—in snow-white robes, studded with gems that flashed back the day,—came the beautiful and regal Nina. The memory of her pride, her ostentation, all forgotten in that moment, she was scarce less welcome—scarce less idolized than her lord. And her smile all radiant with joy—her lip quivering with proud and elate emotion,—never had she seemed at once so born alike for love and for command;—a Zenobia passing through the pomp of Rome,—not a captive, but a queen.

But not upon that stately form rivetted the gaze of Adrian—pale, breathless, trembling, he

clung to the walls against which he leant. Was it a dream? Had the dead revived? Or was it his own—his living Irene—whose soft and melancholy loveliness shone sadly by the side of Nina—a star beside the moon? The pageant faded from his eyes—all grew dim and dark. For a moment he was insensible. When he recovered, the crowd was hurrying along, confused and blent with the mighty stream that followed the procession. Through the moving multitude he caught the graceful form of Irene, again snatched by the closing standards of the procession from his view. His blood rushed back from his heart through every vein. He was as a man who for years had been in a fearful trance, and who is suddenly awakened to the light of heaven.

One man only of that mighty throng remained motionless with Adrian. It was Cecco del Vecchio.

“He did not see me,” muttered the smith to himself; “old friends are forgotten now. Well, well, Cecco del Vecchio hates tyrants still—no matter what their name, or how smoothly they are disguised. He did not see me!—Umph!”

CHAP. II.

THE MASQUERADE.

THE acuter reader has already learned, without the absolute intervention of the author as narrator, the incidents occurring to Rienzi in the interval between his acquittal at Avignon and his return to Rome. As the impression made by Nina upon the softer and better nature of Albornoz died away, he naturally began to consider his guest—as the profound politicians of that day ever considered men—a piece upon the great Chess Board, to be moved, advanced, or sacrificed, as best suited the scheme in view. His purpose accomplished, in the recovery of the Patrimonial territory, the submission of John

di Vico, and the fall and massacre of the Demagogue Baroncelli, the Cardinal deemed it far from advisable to restore to Rome, and with so high a dignity, the able and ambitious Rienzi. Before the daring Roman, even his own great spirit quailed; and he was wholly unable to conceive or to calculate the policy that might be adopted by the new Senator when once more lord of Rome. Without affecting to detain, he therefore declined to assist in restoring him. And Rienzi thus saw himself within an easy march of Rome, without one soldier to protect him against the Barons by the way. But Heaven had decreed that no *single* man, however gifted, or however powerful, should long counteract or master the destinies of Rienzi. And perhaps in no more glittering scene of his life did he ever evince so dexterous and subtle an intellect as he now did in extricating himself from the wiles of the Cardinal. Repairing to Perugia, he had, as we have seen, procured, through the brothers of Montreal, men and money for his return. But the Knight of St. John was greatly mistaken, if he imagined that Rienzi was not tho-

roughly aware of the perilous and treacherous tenure of the support he had received. His keen eye read at a glance the aims and the characters of the brothers of Montreal—he knew that while affecting to serve him, they designed to control—that, made the debtor of the grasping and aspiring Montreal, and surrounded by the troops conducted by Montreal's brethren, he was in the midst of a net which, if not broken, would soon involve fortune and life itself in its fatal and deadly meshes. But, confident in the resources and promptitude of his own genius, he yet sanguinely trusted to make those *his* puppets, who dreamt that he was their own; and with empire for the stake, he cared not how crafty the antagonists he was compelled to engage.

Meanwhile, uniting to all his rasher and all his nobler qualities, a profound dissimulation, he appeared to trust implicitly to his Provençal companions, and his first act on entering the Capitol, after the triumphal procession, was to reward with the highest dignities in his gift Messere Arimbardo and Messere Brettone de Montreal!

High feasting was there that night in the halls of the Capitol; but dearer to Rienzi than all the pomp of the day were the smiles of Nina. Her proud and admiring eyes, swimming with delicious tears, fixed upon his countenance, she but felt that they were re-united, and that the hours, however brilliantly illumined, were hastening to that moment, when, after so desolate and dark an absence, they might once more be alone.

Far other the thoughts of Adrian Colonna, as he sate alone in the dreary palace in the yet more dreary quarter of his haughty race. Irene then was alive,—he had committed some strange error,—she had escaped the devouring pestilence; and something in the pale sadness of her gentle features even in that day of triumph told him he was still remembered. But as his mind by degrees calmed itself from its first wild and tumultuous rapture, he could not help asking himself the question whether they were not still to be divided! Stefanello Colonna, the grandson of the old Stephen, and (by the death of his sire and brother) the youthful head of that

powerful House, had already raised his standard against the Senator. Fortifying himself in the almost impregnable fastness of Palestrina, he had assembled around him all the retainers of his family, and his lawless soldiery now ravaged the neighbouring plains far and wide.

Adrian foresaw that the lapse of a few days would suffice to bring the Colonna and the Senator to open war. Could he take part against those of his own blood ! The very circumstance of his love for Irene would yet more rob such a proceeding of all appearance of disinterested patriotism, and yet more deeply and irremediably stain his knightly fame, wherever the sympathy of his equals was enlisted with the cause of the Colonna. On the other hand, not only his love for the Senator's sister, but his own secret inclinations and honest convictions, were on the side of one who alone seemed to him possessed of the desire and the genius to repress the disorders of his fallen city. Long meditating, he perceived no alternative but in the same cruel neutrality to which he had been before condemned ; but he resolved at least to

make the attempt—rendered favourable and dignified by his birth and reputation—to reconcile the contending parties. To effect this, he saw that he must begin with his haughty cousin. Were it known that he had first obtained an interview with Rienzi—did it appear as if he were charged with overtures from the Senator—he was well aware that if even Stefanello were himself inclined to yield to his representations, the insolent and ferocious Barons who surrounded him would not deign to listen to the envoy of the People's chosen one; and that instead of being honoured as an intercessor, he should be suspected as a traitor. He determined, then, with the next day to depart for Palestrina; but (and his heart beat audibly!) would it not be possible first to obtain an interview with Irene? It was no easy enterprize, surrounded as she was, but he resolved to adventure it. He summoned Giulio.

“The Senator holds a festival this evening—know you if the assemblage is numerous?”

“I hear,” answered Giulio, “that the banquet given to the Ambassadors and Signors to-day, is

to be followed to-morrow by a mask, to which all ranks are admitted. By Bacchus,* if the Tribune only invited nobles, the smallest closet in the Capitol would suffice to receive his maskers. I suppose a mask has been resolved on in order to disguise the quality of the visitors."

Adrian mused a moment, and the result of his reverie was a determination to take advantage of the nature of the revel, and to join the masquerade.

That species of entertainment, though unusual at that season of the year, had been preferred by Rienzi, partly and ostensibly because it was one in which all his numerous and motley supporters could be best received; but chiefly, and secretly, because it afforded himself, and his confidential friends, the occasion to mix unsuspected amongst the throng, and learn more of the real anticipations of the Romans with respect to his policy and his strength, than could well be gathered from the enthusiasm of a public spectacle. This resolution delayed for another sun Adrian's journey to Palestrina.

* Still a common Roman expletive.

The following night was beautifully serene and clear. The better to accommodate the numerous guests, and to take advantage of the warm and moonlit freshness of the air, the open court of the Capitol, with the Place of the Lion, (as well as the state apartments within,) was devoted to the festival.

As Adrian entered the festive court with the rush of the throng, it chanced that in the eager impatience of some maskers, more vehement than the rest, his vizard was deranged. He hastily replaced it, but not before one of the guests had recognised his countenance.

From courtesy, Rienzi and his family remained at first unmasked. They stood at the head of the stairs to which the old Egyptian Lion gave the name. The lights shone over that colossal monument—which torn from its antique home—had witnessed, in its grim repose, the rise and lapse of countless generations, and the dark and stormy revolutions of avenging fate. It was an ill omen often afterwards remarked, that the place of that state festival was the place also of the state executions. But at that mo-

ment, as group after group pressed forward, to win smile and word from that celebrated man, whose fortunes had been the theme of Europe—or to bend in homage to the lustrous loveliness of Nina—no omen and no warning clouded the universal gladness.

Behind Nina, well contented to shrink from the gaze of the throng, and to feel her softer beauty eclipsed by the dazzling and gorgeous charms of her brother's wife, stood Irene. Amidst the crowd, on her alone Adrian fixed his eyes. The years which had flown over the fair brow of the girl of sixteen—then animated by, yet trembling beneath, the first wild breath of Love;—youth in every vein—passion and childish tenderness in every thought, had not marred, but it had changed the character of Irene's beauty. Her cheek, no longer varying with every instant, was settled into a delicate and thoughtful paleness—her form, more rounded to the proportions of Roman beauty, had assumed an air of dignified and calm repose. No longer did the restless eye wander in search of some imagined object; no longer did the lip quiver

into smiles at some untold hope or half unconscious recollection. A grave and mournful expression gave to her face, (still how sweet!) a gravity beyond her years. The bloom, the flush, the April of the heart was gone; but yet neither time, nor sorrow, nor blighted love, had stolen from her countenance its rare and angelic softness—nor that inexpressible and virgin modesty of form and aspect, which, contrasting the bolder beauties of Italy, had more than aught else, distinguished to Adrian from all other women, the dream and idol of his heart. And feeding his gaze upon those dark, deep eyes which spoke of thought far away and busy with the past, Adrian felt again and again that he was not forgotten! Hovering near her, but suffering the crowd to press, one after another, before him, he did not perceive that he had attracted the eagle eye of the Senator.

In fact, as one of the maskers passed Rienze, he whispered, “Beware, a Colonna is among the masks! beneath the reveller’s domino, has often lurked the assassin’s dagger. Yonder stands your foe--mark him?”

These words were the first sharp and thrilling intimation of the perils into which he had rushed, that the Tribune Senator had received since his return. He changed colour slightly, and for some minutes the courtly smile and ready gratulation with which he had hitherto delighted every guest, gave way to a moody abstraction.

“Why stands yon strange man so mute and motionless?” whispered he to Nina. “He speaks to none—he approaches us not—a churl, a churl—he must be seen to.”

“Doubtless, some German or English barbarian,” answered Nina. “Let not, my Lord, so slight a cloud dim your merriment.”

“You are right, dearest—we have friends here—we are well girt. And by my father’s ashes, I feel that I must accustom myself to danger. Nina, let us move on; methinks we might now mix among the maskers—masked ourselves.”

The music played loud and cheerily as the Senator and his party mingled with the throng. But still his eye turned ever towards the grey domino of Adrian, and he perceived

that it followed his steps. Approaching the private entrance of the Capitol, he, for a few moments, lost sight of his unwelcome pursuer: but just as he entered, turning abruptly, Rienzi perceived him close at his side—the next moment the stranger had vanished amidst the throng. But that moment had sufficed to Adrian, he had reached Irene. “Adrian Colonna (he whispered) waits thee beside the Lion.”

In the absorption of his own reflections Rienzi fortunately did not notice the sudden paleness and agitation of his sister. Entered within his palace, he called for wine—the draught revived his spirits—he listened smilingly to the sparkling remarks of Nina, and enduing his mask and disguise, said with his wonted cheerfulness, “Now for Truth—strange that in festivals it should only speak behind a vizard! My sweet sister, thou hast lost thine old smile, and I would rather see that—than—Ha! has Irene vanished?”

“Only, I suppose, to change her dress, my Cola, and mingle with the revellers,” answered Nina. “Let my smile atone for hers.”

Rienzi kissed the bright brow of his wife as she clung fondly to his bosom. "Thy smile is the sunlight," said he, "but this girl disturbs me. Methinks *now*, at least, she might wear a gladder aspect."

"Is there nothing of love beneath my fair sister's gloom?" answered Nina. "Do you not call to mind how she loved Adrian Colonna?"

"Does that fantasy hold still?" returned Rienzi musingly. "Well, and she is fit bride for a monarch."

"Yet it were an alliance that would, better than one with monarchs, strengthen thy power at Rome!"

"Ay,—were it possible—but that haughty race!—Perchance this very masker, that so haunted our steps, was but her lover. I will look to this. Let us forth, my Nina. Am I well cloked?"

"Excellently well—and I?"

"The sun behind a cloud."

"Ah, let us tarry not long; what hour of revel like that when, thy hand in mine,—this head upon thy bosom—we forget the sorrows

we have known, and even the triumphs we have shared?"

Meanwhile, Irene, confused and lost amidst a transport of emotion, already disguised and masked, was threading her way through the crowd, back to the staircase of the Lion. With the absence of the Senator, that spot had become comparatively deserted. Music and the dance attracted the maskers to another quarter of the wide space. And Irene now approaching, beheld the moonlight fall over the statue, and a solitary figure leaning against the pedestal. She paused, the figure approached, and again she heard the voice of her early love.

"Oh Irene! recognised even in this disguise," said Adrian, seizing her trembling hand; "have I lived to gaze again upon that form—to touch this hand? Did not these eyes behold thee lifeless in that fearful vault, which I shudder to recall? By what miracle wert thou raised again? By what means did Heaven spare to this earth, one, that it seemed already to have placed amongst its angels?"

“ Was this indeed thy belief?” said Irene, falteringly, but with an accent eloquent of joy. “ Thou didst not then willingly desert me? Unjust that I was, I wronged thy noble nature, and deemed that my brother’s fall, my humble lineage, thy brilliant fate, had made thee renounce Irene.”

“ Unjust indeed,” answered the lover “ But surely I saw thee amongst the dead!—thy cloak, with the silver stars—who else wore the arms of the Roman Tribune?”

“ Was it but the cloak then which, dropped in the streets, was probably assumed by some more ill-fated victim; was it *that* sight alone, that made thee so soon despair? Ah! Adrian,” continued Irene tenderly, but with reproach; “ Not even when I saw *thee* seemingly lifeless on the couch by which I had watched three days and nights, not even then did *I* despair!”

“ What, then my vision did not deceive me; it was you who watched by my bed in that grim hour, whose love guarded, whose care preserved me. And I, wretch that I was!—”

“ Nay,” answered Irene, “ your thought was

natural. Heaven seemed to endow me with supernatural strength, whilst I was necessary to thee. But judge of my dismay. I left thee to seek the good friar who attended thee as thy leach; I returned, and found thee not. Heart-sick and terrified, I searched the desolate city in vain. Strong as I was while hope supported me, I sunk beneath fear.— And my brother found me senseless, and stretched on the ground, by the church of St. Mark.”

“The church of St. Mark! so foretold his dream!”

“He had told me he had met thee; we searched for thee in vain: at length we heard that thou hadst left the city, and—and—I rejoiced, Adrian, but I repined!”

For some minutes the young lovers surrendered themselves to the delight of reunion, while new explanations called forth new transports.

“And now,” murmured Irene, “now that we have met—” she paused, and her mask concealed her blushes.

“ Now that we have met,” said Adrian, filling up the silence, “ wouldst thou say farther that we should not part ! Trust me, dearest, that is the hope that animates my heart. It was but to enjoy these brief bright moments with thee, that I delayed my departure to Palestrina. Could I but hope to bring my young cousin into amity with thy brother, no barrier would prevent our union. Willingly I forget the past—the death of my unhappy kinsmen ; (victims, it is true, to their own faults ;) and perhaps, amidst all the crowds that hailed his return, none more appreciated the great and lofty qualities of Cola di Rienzi, than did Adrian Colonna.”

“ If this be so,” said Irene, “ let me hope the best ; meanwhile, it is enough of comfort and of happiness to know, that we love each other as of old. Ah, Adrian, I am sadly changed ; and often have I thought it a thing beyond my dreams, that thou shouldst see me again and love me still.”

“ Fairer art thou and lovelier than ever,” answered Adrian, passionately ; “ and time, which has ripened thy bloom, has but taught

me more deeply to feel thy value. Farewell, Irene, I linger here no longer; thou wilt, I trust, hear soon of my success with my House, and ere the week be over I may return to claim thy hand in face of day."

The lovers parted; Adrian lingered on the spot, and Irene hastened to bury her emotion and her raptures in her own chamber.

As her form vanished, and the young Colonna slowly turned away, a tall mask strode abruptly towards him.

"Thou art a Colonna—" it said, "and in the power of the Senator. Dost thou tremble?"

"If I be a Colonna, rude masker," answered Adrian coolly, "thou shouldst know that a Colonna never trembles."

The stranger laughed aloud, and then lifting his mask, Adrian saw that it was the Senator who stood before him.

"My Lord Adrian di Castello," said Rienzi, resuming all his gravity, "is it as friend or foe, that you have honoured our revels this night?"

"Senator of Rome," answered Adrian with equal stateliness, "I partake of no man's hospi-

tality but as a friend. A foe, at least to you, I trust never justly to be esteemed."

"I would," rejoined Rienzi, "that I could apply to myself unreservedly that most flattering speech. Are these friendly feelings entertained towards me as the Governor of the Roman people, or as the brother of the woman who has listened to your vows?"

Adrian, who when the Senator had unmasked had followed his example, felt at these words that his eye quailed beneath Rienzi's. However, he recovered himself with the wonted readiness of an Italian, and replied laconically,

"As both."

"Both!" echoed Rienzi, "then, indeed, noble Adrian, you are welcome hither. And yet methinks, if you conceived there was no cause for enmity between us, you would have wooed the sister of Cola di Rienzi in a guise more worthy of your birth; and permit me to add, of that station, which God, destiny, and my country, have accorded unto *me*. You dare not, young Colonna, meditate dishonour to the sister of the Senator of Rome. High born as you are, she is your equal."

“ Were I the Emperor, whose simple knight I but am, your sister were my equal,” answered Adrian, warmly. “ Rienzi, I grieve that I am discovered to you yet. I had trusted that as a mediator between the Barons and yourself, I might first have won your confidence, and then claimed my reward. Know that with to-morrow’s dawn, I depart for Palestrina, seeking to reconcile my young cousin to the choice of the People and the Pontiff. Various reasons, which I need not now detail, would have made me wish to undertake this heraldry of peace without previous communication with you. But since we *have* met, entrust me with any terms of conciliation, and I pledge you the right-hand, not of a Roman noble—alas ! the *prisca fides* has departed from that pledge !—but of a knight of the imperial court, that I will not betray your confidence.”

Rienzi, accustomed to read the human countenance, had kept his eyes intently fixed upon Adrian while he spoke ; when the Colonna concluded, he pressed the proffered hand, and said with that familiar and winning sweetness, which at times was so peculiar to his manner,

“ I trust you, Adrian, from my soul. You were mine early friend in calmer, perchance happier, years. And never did river reflect the stars more clearly, than your heart then mirrored back the truth. I trust you !”

While thus speaking, he had mechanically led back the Colonna to the statue of the Lion ; there pausing, he resumed.

“ Know that I have this morning despatched my delegate to your cousin Stefanello. With all due courtesy, I have apprised him of my return to Rome, and invited hither his honoured presence. Forgetting all ancient feuds, mine own past exile, I have assured him, here, the station and dignity due to the head of the Colonna. All that I ask in return, is obedience to the law. Years and reverses have abated my younger pride, and though I may yet preserve the sternness of the Judge, none shall hereafter complain of the insolence of the Tribune.”

“ I would,” answered Adrian, “ that your mission to Stefanello had been delayed a day ; I would fain have forestalled its purport. How-

beit, you increase my desire of departure, should I yet succeed in obtaining an honourable and peaceful reconciliation, it is not in disguise that I will woo thy sister."

"And never did Colonna," replied Rienzi loftily, "bring to his House a maiden whose alliance more gratified ambition. I yet see, as I have seen ever, in mine own projects, and mine own destinies, the chart of the new Roman Empire!"

"Be not too sanguine yet, brave Rienzi," replied Adrian; "bethink thee on how many scheming brains this dumb image of stone hath looked down from its pedestal—schemes of sand, and schemers of dust. Thou hast enough, at present, for the employ of all thine energy—not to extend thy power, but to preserve thyself. For, trust me, never stood human greatness on so wild and dark a precipice!"

"Thou art honest," said the Senator, "and these are the first words of doubt, and yet of sympathy, I have heard in Rome. But the people love me—the Barons have fled from Rome—the Pontiff approves—and the swords of the North-

men guard the avenues of the Capitol. But these are nought : in mine own honesty are my spear and buckler. Oh, never," continued Rienzi, kindling with his enthusiasm, " never since the days of the old Republic, did Roman dream a purer and a brighter aspiration, than that which animates and supports me now. Peace restored—law established—art, letters, intellect, dawning upon the night of time ; the patricians, no longer bandits of rapine, but the guard of order, the people ennobled from a mob, brave to protect, enlightened to guide, themselves. Then, not by the violence of arms, but by the majesty of her moral power, shall the Mother of Nations claim the obedience of her children. Thus dreaming and thus hoping, shall I tremble or despond ? No, Adrian Colonna, come weal or woe, I abide, unshrinking and unawed, by the chances of my doom !"

So much did the manner and the tone of the Senator exalt his language, that even the sober sense of Adrian was enchanted and subdued. He kissed the hand he held, and said earnestly,

“A doom that I will deem it my boast to share—a career that it will be my glory to smooth. If I succeed in my present mission—”

“You are my brother!” said Rienzi.

“If I fail?”

“You may equally claim that alliance. You pause—you change colour.”

“Can I desert my House?”

“Young Lord,” said Rienzi, loftily, “say rather can you desert your country? If you doubt my honesty, if you fear my ambition, desist from your task, rob me not of a single foe. But if you believe that I have the will and the power to serve the State—if you recognise, even in the reverses and calamities I have known and mastered, the protecting hand of the Saviour of Nations—if those reverses were but the mercies of Him who chasteneth—necessary, it may be, to correct my earlier daring and sharpen yet more my intellect—if, in a word, thou believest me one whom, whatever be his faults, God hath preserved for the sake of Rome, forget that you are a Colonna—remember only that you are a Roman!”

“You have conquered me—strange and commanding spirit,” said Adrian in a low voice, completely carried away. “And whatever the conduct of my kindred, I am your’s and Rome’s—Farewell!”

CHAP. III

ADRIAN'S ADVENTURES AT PALESTRINA.

It was yet noon when Adrian beheld before him the lofty mountains that shelter Palestrina, the *Præneste* of the ancient world. Back to a period before Romulus existed, in the earliest ages of that mysterious civilisation, which in Italy preceded the birth of Rome, could be traced the existence and the power of that rocky city. Eight dependent towns owned its sway and its wealth; its position, and the strength of those mighty walls, in whose ruins may yet be traced the masonry of the remote Pelasgi, had long braved the ambition of the neighbour-

ing Rome. From that very citadel, the Mural Crown* of the mountain, had waved the standard of Marius; and up the road which Adrian's scanty troop slowly wound, had echoed the march of the murderous Sylla, on his return from the Mithridatic war. Below, where the city spread towards the plain, were yet seen the shattered and roofless columns of the once celebrated Temple of Fortune,—and still the immemorial olives clustered grey and mournfully around the ruins.

A more formidable hold the Barons of Rome could not have selected; and as Adrian's military eye scanned the steep ascent and the rugged walls, he felt that with ordinary skill it might defy for months all the power of the Roman Senator. Below, in the fertile valley, dismantled cottages and trampled harvests attested the violence and rapine of the insurgent Barons; and at that very moment were seen in the old

* Hence, apparently, its Greek name of Stephane. Palestrina is yet one of the many proofs which the vicinity of Rome affords of the old Greek civilisation of Italy.

plain of the warlike Hernici, troops of armed men, driving before them herds of sheep and cattle, collected in their lawless incursions. In sight of that *Præneste*, which had been the favourite retreat of the luxurious Lords of Rome in its most polished day, the Age of Iron seemed renewed.

The banner of the Colonna, borne by Adrian's troop, obtained ready admittance at the Porta del Sole. As he passed up the irregular and narrow streets that ascended to the citadel, groups of foreign mercenaries,—half ragged, half tawdry knots of abandoned women,—mixed here and there with the liveries of the Colonna, stood loitering amidst the ruins of ancient fanes and palaces, or basked lazily in the sun, upon terraces, through which, from amidst weeds and grass, glowed the imperishable hues of the rich mosaics, which had made the pride of that lettered and graceful nobility, of whom savage freebooters were now the heirs.

The contrast between the Past and the Present forcibly occurred to Adrian, as he passed along; and despite his order, he felt as if civi-

lisation itself were enlisted against his House upon the side of Rienzi.

Leaving his train in the court of the citadel, Adrian demanded admission to the presence of his cousin. He had left Stefanello a child on his departure from Rome, and there could therefore be but a slight and unfamiliar acquaintance betwixt them, despite their kindred.

Peals of laughter came upon his ear, as he followed one of Stefanello's gentlemen through a winding passage that led to the principal chamber. The door was thrown open, and Adrian found himself in a rude hall, to which some appearance of hasty state and attempted comfort had been given. Costly arras imperfectly clothed the stone walls, and the rich seats and decorated tables, which the growing civilisation of the northern cities of Italy had already introduced in the palaces of Italian nobles, strangely contrasted the rough pavement, spread with heaps of armour negligently piled around. At the farther end of the apartment, Adrian shudderingly perceived, set in due and exact order, the implements of torture.

Stefanello Colonna, with two other Barons, indolently reclined on seats drawn around a table, in the recess of a deep casement, from which might be still seen the same glorious landscape, bounded by the dim spires of Rome, which Hannibal and Pyrrhus had ascended that very citadel to survey !

Stefanello himself, in the first bloom of youth, bore already on his beardless countenance those traces usually the work of the passions and vices of maturest manhood. His features were cast in the mould of the old Stephen's;—in their clear, sharp, highbred outline might be noticed that regular and graceful symmetry, which blood, in men as in animals, will sometimes entail through generations; but the features were wasted and meagre. His brows were knit in an eternal frown; his thin and bloodless lips wore that insolent contempt which seems so peculiarly cold and unlovely in early youth; and the deep and livid hollows round his eyes, spoke of habitual excess and premature exhaustion. By him sat, (reconciled by hatred to another,) the hereditary foes of his race: the soft, but

cunning and astute features of Luca di Savelli, contrasted with the broad frame and ferocious countenance of the Prince of the Orsini.

The young head of the Colonna rose with some cordiality to receive his cousin. "Welcome," he said, "dear Adrian; you are arrived in time to assist us with your well-known military skill. Think you not we shall stand a long siege, if the insolent plebeian dare adventure it? You know our friends, the Orsini and the Savelli? Thanks to St. Peter, or St. Peter's delegate, we have now happily meaner throats to cut than those of each other!"

Thus saying, Stefanello again threw himself listlessly on his seat, and the shrill woman's voice of Savelli, took part in the dialogue.

"I would, noble Signor, that you had come a few hours earlier—we are still making merry at the recollection—he, he, he!"

"Ah, excellent," cried Stefanello, joining in the laugh, "our cousin has had a loss. Know Adrian, that this base fellow, whom the Pope has had the impudence to create Senator, dared

but yesterday, to send us a varlet, whom he called, by our Lady!—his *ambassador*!”

“Would you could have seen his mantle, Signor Adrian,” chimed in the Savelli: “purple velvet, as I live, decorated in gold, with the arms of Rome—we soon spoiled his finery.”

“What!” exclaimed Adrian, “you did not break the laws of all nobility and knighthood; you offered no insult to a herald!”

“Herald, sayst thou?” cried Stefanello, frowning till his eyes were scarce visible. “It is for Princes and Barons alone to employ heralds. An I had had my will, I would have sent back the minion’s head to the usurper.”

“What did ye then?” asked Adrian coldly.

“Bade our swincherds dip the fellow in the ditch, and gave him a night’s lodging in a dungeon to dry himself withall.”

“And this morning—he, he, he!” added the Savelli, “we had him before us, and drew his teeth, one by one;—I would you could have heard the fellow mumble out for mercy!”

Adrian rose hastily, and struck the table fiercely with his gauntlet.

“Stefanello Colonna,” said he, colouring with noble rage, “answer me: did you dare to inflict this indelible disgrace upon the name we jointly bear? Tell me, at least, that you protested against this foul treason to all the laws of civilisation and of honour. You answer not. House of the Colonna, can such be thy representative !”

“To me these words!” said Stefanello, trembling with passion, “Beware ! Methinks *thou* art the traitor, leagued perhaps with yon rascal mob. Well do I remember that thou, the betrothed of the Demagogue’s sister, didst not join with my uncle and my father of old, but didst basely leave the city to her plebeian tyrant.”

“That did he,” said the fierce Orsini, approaching Adrian menacingly, while the gentle cowardice of Savelli sought in vain to pluck him back by the mantle—“that did he, and but for thy presence, Stefanello.”

“Coward and blusterer,” interrupted Adrian, fairly beside himself with indignation and shame,

and dashing his gauntlet in the very face of the advancing Orsini—"wouldst thou threaten one who has maintained, in every list of Europe, and against the stoutest Chivalry of the North, the honour of Rome, which thy deeds the while disgraced? By this gage, I spit upon and defy thee. With lance and with brand, on horse and on foot, I maintain against thee and all thy line, that thou art no knight to have thus maltreated, in thy strongholds, a peaceful and unarmed herald. Yes, even here, on the spot of thy disgrace, I challenge thee to arms."

"To the court below! Follow me," said Orsini sullenly, and striding towards the threshold, "What ho there, my helmet and breastplate!"

"Stay, noble Orsini," said Stefanello. "The insult offered to thee is my quarrel—mine was the deed—and against me speaks this degenerate scion of our line. Adrian di Castello,—sometime called Colonna—surrender your sword—you are my prisoner!"

"Oh!" said Adrian, grinding his teeth; "that my ancestral blood did not flow through thy

veins—else—but enough ! Me ! your equal, and the favoured Knight of the Emperor, whose advent now brightens the frontiers of Italy !—me—you dare not detain. For your friends, I shall meet them yet perhaps, ere many days are over, where none shall separate our swords. Till then, remember, Orsini, that it is against no unpractised arm that thou wilt have to redeem thine honour !”

Adrian, his drawn sword in his hand, strode towards the door, and passed the Orsini, who stood, lowering and irresolute, in the centre of the apartment.

Savelli whispered Stefanello. “He says, ‘Ere many days be past!’ Be sure, dear Signor, that he goes to join Rienzi. Remember, the alliance he once sought with the Tribune’s sister may be renewed. Beware of him ! Ought he to leave the castle ? The name of a Colonna, associated with the mob, would distract and divide half our strength.”

“Fear me not,” returned Stefanello, with a malignant smile. “Ere you spoke, I had determined !”

The young Colonna lifted the arras from the wall, opened a door, passed into a low hall, in which sate twenty mercenaries ;

“Quick !” said he. “Seize and disarm yon stranger in the green mantle—but slay him not. Bid the guard below find dungeons for his train. Quick ! ere he reach the gate.”

Adrian had gained the open hall below—his train and his steed were in sight in the court—when suddenly the soldiery of the Colonna, rushing through another passage than that which he had past, surrounded and intercepted his retreat.

“Yield thee, Adrian de Castello,” cried Stefanello from the summit of the stairs ; “or your blood be on your own head.”

Three steps did Adrian make through the press, and three of his enemies fell beneath his sword. “To the rescue !” he shouted to his band, and already those bold and daring troopers had gained the hall. Presently the alarum bell tolled loud—the court swarmed with soldiers. Oppressed by numbers, beat down rather than subdued, Adrian’s little train were soon se-

cured, and the flower of the Colonna, wounded, breathless, disarmed, but still uttering loud defiance, was a prisoner in the fortress of his kinsman.

CHAP. IV.

THE POSITION OF THE SENATOR--THE WORK OF
YEARS--THE REWARDS OF AMBITION.

THE indignation of Rienzi may readily be conceived, on the return of his herald mutilated and dishonoured. His temper, so naturally stern, was rendered yet more hard by the remembrance of his wrongs and trials ; and the result which attended his overtures of conciliation to Stefanello Colonna, stung him to the soul.

The bell of the Capitol tolled to arms within ten minutes after the return of the herald. The great gonfalon of Rome was unfurled on the highest tower ; and the very evening after Adrian's arrest, the forces of the Senator, headed by Rienzi in person, were on the

road to Palestrina. The troopers of the Barons had, however, made incursions as far as Tivoli with the supposed connivance of the inhabitants, and Rienzi halted at that beautiful spot to raise recruits, and receive the allegiance of the suspected, while his soldiers, with Arimbald and Brettone at their head, went in search of the marauders. The brothers of Montreal returned late at night with the intelligence, that the troopers of the Barons had secured themselves amidst the recesses of the wood of Pantano.

The red spot mounted to Rienzi's brow. He gazed hard at Brettone, who stated the news to him, and a natural suspicion shot across his mind.

“How—escaped!” he said. “Is it possible? Enough of such idle skirmishes with these lordly robbers. Will the hour ever come when I shall meet them, hand to hand? Brettone”—and the brother of Montreal felt the dark eye of Rienzi pierce to his very heart; “Brettone!” said he, with an abrupt change of voice, “are your men to be *trusted*? Is there no connivance with the Barons?”

"How !" said Brettone, sullenly, but somewhat confused.

"How me no hows !" quoth the Tribune-Senator, fiercely. "I know that thou art a valiant Captain of valiant men. Thou and thy brother Arimbaldo have served me well, and I have rewarded ye well ! Have I not ? Speak !"

"Senator," answered Arimbaldo, taking up the word ; "you have kept your word to us. You have raised us to the highest rank your power could bestow, and this has amply atoned our humble services."

"I am glad ye allow thus much," said the Tribune.

Arimbaldo proceeded somewhat more loftily, "I trust, my Lord, you do not doubt us."

"Arimbaldo," replied Rienzi, in a voice of deep, but half-suppressed emotion ; "you are a lettered man, and you have seemed to share my projects for the regeneration of our common kind. *You* ought not to betray me. There is something in unison between *us*. But, chide me not, I am surrounded by treason, and the very air I breathe seems poison to my lips."

There was a pathos mingled with Rienzi's words which touched the milder brother of Montreal. He bowed in silence. Rienzi surveyed him wistfully, and sighed. Then, changing the conversation, he spoke of their intended siege of Palestrina, and shortly afterwards retired to rest.

Left alone, the brothers regarded each other for some moments in silence. "Brettone," said Arimbaldo at length, in a whispered voice, "my heart misgives me. I like not Walter's ambitious schemes. With our own countrymen we are frank and loyal,—why play the traitor with this high-souled Roman?"

"Tush !" said Brettone. "Our brother's hand of iron alone can sway this turbulent people; and if Rienzi be betrayed, so also are his enemies, the Barons. No more of this ! I have tidings from Montreal; he will be in Rome in a few days."

"And then— !"

"Rienzi, weakened by the Barons, (for he must not conquer,)—the Barons weakened by Rienzi,—our Northmen seize the Capitol, and the

soldiery—now scattered throughout Italy—will fly to the standard of the Great Captain. Montreal must be first Podesta, then King, of Rome.”

Arimbaldo moved restlessly in his seat, and the brethren conferred no more on their projects.

The situation of Rienzi was precisely that which tends the most to sour and to harden the fairest nature. With an intellect capable of the grandest designs, a heart that beat with the loftiest emotions, elevated to the sunny pinnacle of power and surrounded by loud-tongued adulators, he knew not among *men* a single breast in which he could confide. He was as one on a steep ascent, whose footing crumbles, while every bough at which he grasps seems to rot at his touch. He found the people more than ever eloquent in his favour, but while they shouted raptures as he passed, not a man was capable of *making a sacrifice for him!* The liberty of a state is never achieved by a single individual; if not the People—if not the greater number—a zealous and fervent minority at least, must go hand in hand with him. Rome demanded sacrifices in all who sought the Ro-

man regeneration—sacrifices of time, ease, and money. The crowd followed the procession of the Senator, but not a single Roman devoted his life, *unpaid*, to his standard; not a single coin was subscribed in the defence of freedom. Against him were arrayed the most powerful, and the most ferocious Basons of Italy; each of whom could maintain, at his own cost, a little army of practised warriors. With Rienzi, were traders and artificers, who were willing to enjoy the fruits of liberty, but not to labour at the soil, who demanded, in return for empty shouts, peace and riches; and who expected that one man was to effect in a day what would be cheaply purchased by the struggle of a generation. All their dark and rude notion of a Reformed state was to live unbutchered by the Barons, and untaxed by their governors. Rome—I say, gave to her Senator not a free arm, nor a voluntary florin. Well aware of the danger which surrounds the ruler who defends his state by foreign swords, the fondest wish, and the most visionary dream of Rienzi, was to revive amongst the Romans, in their first enthusiasm at his return,

an organized and voluntary force, who, in protecting him, would protect themselves:—not as before, in his first power, a nominal force of twenty thousand men, who at any hour might yield (as they did yield) to one hundred and fifty; but a regular, well-disciplined, and trusty body, numerous enough to resist aggression, not numerous enough to become themselves the aggressors.

Hitherto all his private endeavours, his public exhortations, had failed; the crowd listened—shouted—saw him quit the city to meet their tyrants, and returned to their shops, saying to each other, “What a great man!”

The character of Rienzi has chiefly received for its judges men of the closet, who speculate upon human beings as if they were steam-engines—who gauge the great, not by their merit, but their success, and who have censured or sneered at the Tribune, where they should have condemned the People! Had but one-half the spirit been found in Rome which ran through a single vein of Cola di Rienzi,—the august Republic, if not the majestic Empire, of Rome,

might be existing now ! Turning from the People, the Senator saw his rude and savage troops accustomed to the license of a tyrant's camp, and under commanders in whom it was ruin really to confide—whom it was equal ruin openly to distrust. Hemmed in on every side by dangers, his character daily grew more restless, vigilant, and stern ; and still, with all the aims of the patriot, he felt all the curses of the tyrant. Without the rough and hardening career which, through a life of warfare, had brought Cromwell to a similar power—with more of grace and intellectual softness in his composition, he resembled that yet greater man in some points of character—in his religious enthusiasm, his rigid justice often forced by circumstance into severity, but never wantonly cruel or blood-thirsty—in his singular pride of country—and his mysterious command over the minds of others. But he resembled the giant Englishman far more in circumstance than original nature, and that circumstance assimilated their characters at the close of their several

careers. Like Cromwell, beset by secret or open foes, the assassin's dagger ever gleamed before his eyes. And his stout heart, unawed by real, trembled at imagined, terrors. The countenance changing suddenly from red to white—the restless eye, belying the composed majesty of mien—the muttering lips—the broken slumber—the secret corselet;—these to both were the rewards of Power!

The elasticity of youth had left the Tribune! His frame, which had endured so many shocks, had contracted a painful disease in the dungeon of Avignon—his high soul still supported him, but the nerves gave way. Tears came readily into his eyes, and often, like Cromwell, he was thought to weep from hypocrisy, when in truth it was the hysteric of overwrought and irritable emotion. In all his former life singularly temperate, he now fled from his goading thoughts to the beguiling excitement of wine. He drank deep, though its effects were never visible upon him except in a freer and wilder mood, and the indulgence of that racy humour, half-

mirthful, half-bitter, for which his younger day had been distinguished. Now the mirth had more loudness, but the bitterness more gall.

Such were the characteristics of Rienzi at his return to power—made more apparent with every day. Nina he still loved with the same tenderness, and, if possible, she adored him more than ever; but, the zest and freshness of triumphant ambition gone, somehow or other, their intercourse together had not its old charm. Formerly they talked constantly of the *future*—of the bright days in store for them. Now, with a sharp and uneasy pang, Rienzi turned from all thought of that “gay to-morrow.” There was no “gay to-morrow” for him! Dark and thorny as was the present hour, all beyond seemed yet less cheering and more ominous. Still he had some moments brief but brilliant,—when, forgetting the iron race amongst whom he was thrown, he plunged into scholastic reveries of the worshipped Past, and half-fancied that he was of a People worthy of his genius and his devotion. Like most men who have been preserved through great dangers, he con-

tinued with encreasing fondness to nourish a credulous belief in the grandeur of his own destiny. He could not imagine that he had been so delivered, and for no end! He was the Elected, and therefore the Instrument, of Heaven. And thus, that Bible which in his loneliness, his wanderings, and his prison, had been his solace and support, was more than ever needed in his greatness.

It was another source of sorrow and chagrin to one who, amidst such circumstances of public emergence, required so peculiarly the support and sympathy of private friends, that he found he had incurred amongst his old coadjutors the common penalty of absence. Some were dead others, wearied with the storms of public life, and chilled in their ardour by the turbulent revolutions to which, in every effort for her amelioration, Rome had been subjected, had retired, some altogether from the city—some from all participation in political affairs. In his halls, the Tribune-Senator was surrounded by unfamiliar faces, and a new generation. Of the heads of the popular party, most were animated by a

stern dislike to the Pontifical domination, and looked with suspicion and repugnance upon one who, if he governed for the People, had been trusted and honoured by the Pope. Rienzi was not a man to forget former friends, however lowly, and had already found time to seek an interview with Cecco del Vecchio. But that stern Republican had received him with coldness. His foreign mercenaries, and his title of Senator, were things that the artizan could not digest. With his usual bluntness, he had said so to Rienzi.

“As for the last,” answered the Tribune, affably, “names do not alter natures. When I forget that to be delegate to the Pontiff is to be the guardian of his flock, forsake me. As for the first, let me but see five hundred Romans sworn to stand armed day and night for the defence of Rome, and I dismiss the Northmen.”

Cecco del Vecchio was unsoftened; honest, but uneducated--impracticable, and by nature a malcontent, he felt as if he were no longer necessary to the Senator, and this offended his pride. Strange as it may seem, the sullen arti-

san bore, too, a secret grudge against Rienzi, for not having seen and selected him from a crowd of thousands on the day of his triumphal entry. Such are the small offences which produce deep danger to the great !

The artizans still held their meetings, and Cecco del Vecchio's voice was heard loud in grumbling forebodings. But what wounded Rienzi yet more than the alienation of the rest, was the confused and altered manner of his old friend and familiar, Pandulfo di Guido. Missing that popular citizen among those who daily offered their homage at the Capitol, he had sent for him, and sought in vain to revive their ancient intimacy. Pandulfo affected great respect, but not all the condescension of the Senator could conquer his distance and his restraint. In fact, Pandulfo had learned to form ambitious projects of his own; and but for the return of Rienzi, Pandulfo di Guido felt that he might now, with greater safety, and indeed with some connivance from the Barons, have been the Tribune of the People. The facility to rise into popular eminence which a disordered and cor-

rupt state, unblest by a regular constitution, offers to ambition, breeds the jealousy and the rivalry, which destroy union, and rot away the ties of party.

Such was the situation of Rienzi, and yet wonderful to say, he seemed to be adored by the multitude ; and law and liberty, life and death, were in his hands !

Of all those who attended his person, Angelo Villani was the most favoured—that youth who had accompanied Rienzi in his long exile, had also, at the wish of Nina, attended him from Avignon, through his sojourn in the camp of Alborno. His zeal, intelligence, and frank and evident affection, blinded the Senator to the faults of his character, and established him more and more in the gratitude of Rienzi. He loved to feel that one faithful heart beat near him, and the page, raised to the rank of his chamberlain, always attended his person, and slept in his ante-chamber.

Retiring that night at Tivoli, to the apartment prepared for him, the Senator sat down by the open casement, through which were seen waving in the starlight, the dark pines that

crowned the hills, while the stillness of the hour gave to his ear the dash of the waterfalls, heard above the regular and measured tread of the sentinels below. Leaning his cheek upon his hand, Rienzi long surrendered himself to gloomy thought, and, when he looked up, he saw the bright blue eye of Villani fixed in anxious sympathy on his countenance.

“Is my Lord unwell?” asked the young chamberlain, hesitating.

“Not so, my Angelo; but somewhat sick at heart. Methinks, for a September night, the air is chill!”

“Angelo,” resumed Rienzi, who had already acquired that uneasy curiosity which belongs to an uncertain power—“Angelo,—bring me hither yon writing implements—hast thou heard aught what the men say of our probable success against Palestrina?”

“Would my Lord wish to learn all their gossip, whether it please or not?” answered Villani.

“If I studied only to hear what pleased me, Angelo, I should never have returned to Rome.”

“Why then, I heard a constable of the Northmen say, meaningly, that the place will not be carried.”

“Humph ! And what said the captains of my Roman Legion ?”

“My Lord, I have heard it whispered that they fear defeat less than they do the revenge of the Barons, if they are successful.”

“And with such tools the living race of Europe and misjudging posterity will deem that the workman is to shape out the Ideal and the Perfect ! Bring me yon Bible.”

As Angelo reverently brought to Rienzi the sacred book, he said,

“Just before I left my companions below, there was a rumour that the Lord Adrian Colonna had been imprisoned by his kinsman.”

“I too heard, and I believe, as much,” returned Rienzi ; “these Barons would gibbet their own children in irons, if there were any chance of the shackles growing rusty for want of prey. But the wicked shall be brought low, and their strong places shall be made desolate.”

“ I would, my Lord,” said Villani, “ that our Northmen had other captains than these Provençals.”

“ Why ?” asked Rienzi, abruptly.

“ Have the creatures of the Captain of the Grand Company ever held faith with any man whom it suited the avarice or the ambition of Montreal to betray ? Was he not, a few months ago, the right arm of John di Vico, and did he not sell his services to John di Vico’s enemy, the Cardinal Albornoz ? These warriors barter men as cattle.”

“ Thou describest Montreal rightly, a dangerous and an awful man. But, methinks his brothers are of a duller and meaner kind ; they dare not the crimes of the robber Captain. Howbeit, Angelo, thou hast touched a string that will make discord with sleep to night. Fair youth, thy young eyes have need of slumber ; withdraw, and when thou hearest men envy Rienzi, think that——”

“ God never made Genius to be envied !” interrupted Villani, with an energy that over-

came his respect.——“We envy not the sun, but rather the valleys that ripen beneath his beams.”

“Verily, if I be the sun,” said Rienzi, with a bitter and melancholy smile, “I long for night,—and come it will, to the human as to the celestial Pilgrim !—Thank Heaven, at least, that our ambition cannot make us immortal !”

CHAP. V.

THE BITER BIT.

THE next morning when Rienzi descended to the room where his captains awaited him, his quick eye perceived that a cloud still lowered upon the brow of Messere Brettone. Arimbaldò, sheltered by the recess of the rude casement, shunned his eye.

“A fair morning, gentles,” said Rienzi; “the Sun laughs upon our enterprize. I have messengers from Rome betimes—fresh troops will join us ere noon.”

“I am glad, Senator,” answered Brettone, “that you have tidings which will counteract the ill of those I have to narrate to thee. The soldiers murmur loudly—their pay is due to

them—and I fear me that without money they will not march to Palestrina.”

“As they will,” returned Rienzi, carelessly. “It is but a few days since they entered Rome; pay did they receive in advance—if they demand more the Colonna and Orsini may outbid me:—Draw off your soldiers, Knight of Narbonne, and farewell.”

Brettone’s countenance fell—it was his object to get Rienzi more and more in his power, and he wished not to suffer him to gain that strength which would accrue to him from the fall of Palestrina: the indifference of the Senator foiled and entrapped him in his own net.

“That must not be,” said the brother of Montreal after a confused silence—“we cannot leave you thus to your enemies—the soldiers, it is true, demand pay—”

“And should have it,” said Rienzi. “I know these mercenaries—it is ever with them, mutiny or money. I will throw myself on my Romans, and triumph—or fall if so Heaven decrees, with them. Acquaint your constables with my resolve.”

Scarce were these words spoken, ere, as previously concerted with Brettone, the chief constable of the mercenaries appeared at the door. "Senator," said he, with a rough semblance of respect, "your orders to march have reached me, I have sought to marshal my men—but—"

"I know what thou wouldst say, friend," interrupted Rienzi, waving his hand—"Messere Brettone will give you my reply. Another time, Sir Captain, more ceremony with the Senator of Rome—you may withdraw."

The unforeseen dignity of Rienzi rebuked and abashed the constable; he looked at Brettone, who motioned him to depart. He closed the door and withdrew.

"What is to be done?" said Brettone.

"Sir Knight," replied Rienzi gravely, "let us understand each other. Would you serve me or not? If the first, you are not my equal, but subordinate—and you must obey and not dictate—if the last, my debt to you shall be discharged, and the world is wide enough for both."

“ We have declared allegiance to you,” answered Brettone, “ and it shall be given.”

“ One caution before I re-accept your fealty,” replied Rienzi very slowly. “ For an open foe, I have my sword—for a traitor, mark me, Rome has the axe;—of the first I have no fear, for the last no mercy.”

“ These are not words that should pass between friends,” said Brettone, turning pale with suppressed emotion.

“ Friends!—ye are my friends then!—your hands!—Friends, so ye are!—and shall prove it! Dear Arimbaldo, thou, like myself, art book-learned, a clerkly soldier. Dost thou remember how in the Roman history it is told that the Treasury lacked money for the soldiers. The Consul convened the Nobles. ‘ We,’ said he, ‘ that have the offices and dignity, should be the first to pay for them.’ Ye heed me, my friends—the nobles took the hint, they found the money—the army was paid. This example is not lost on you. I have made you the leaders of my force, Rome hath showered her honours on you. Your generosity shall commence the exam-

ple which the Romans shall thus learn of strangers. Ye gaze at me, *my friends* ! I read your noble souls—and thank ye beforehand. Ye have the dignity and the offices ; ye have also the wealth !—pay the hirelings, pay them !”

Had a thunderbolt fallen at the feet of Brettone, he could not have been more astounded than at this simple suggestion of Rienzi's. He lifted his eyes to the Senator's face, and saw there, that smile, which he had already, bold as he was, learned to dread. He felt himself fairly sunk in the pit he had dug for another. There was that in the Senator-Tribune's brow, that told him to refuse was to declare open war, and the moment was not ripe for that—

“ Ye accede,” said Rienzi ; “ ye have done well.”

The Senator clapped his hands—his guard appeared.

“ Summon the head constables of the soldiery.”

The brothers still remained dumb.

The constables entered.

“ My friends,” said Rienzi, “ Messere Bret-

tone and Messere Arimbaldo, have my directions to divide amongst your force a thousand florins. This evening we encamp beneath Palestrina."

The constables withdrew in visible surprise. Rienzi gazed a moment on the brothers, chuckling within himself—for his sarcastic humour enjoyed his triumph. "You lament not your devotion, *my friends!*"

"No," said Brettone, rousing himself, "the sum but trivially swells our debt."

"Frankly said—your hands once more!—the good people of Tivoli expect me in the Piazza—they require some admonitions. Adieu till noon."

When the door closed on Rienzi, Brettone struck the handle of his sword fiercely—"The Roman laughs at us," said he. "But let Walter de Montreal once appear in Rome and the proud jester shall pay us dearly for this."

"Hush!" said Arimbaldo, "walls have ears, and that imp of Satan, young Villani, seems to me ever at our heels!"

"A thousand florins! I trust his heart hath

as many drops," growled the chafed Brettone, unheeding his brother.

The soldiers were paid—the army marched—the eloquence of the Senator had augmented his force by volunteers from Tivoli, and wild and half armed peasantry joined his standard, from the Campagna and the neighbouring mountains.

Palestrina was besieged: Rienzi continued dexterously to watch the brothers of Montreal. Under pretext of imparting to the Italian volunteers, the advantage of their military science, he separated them from their mercenaries, and assigned to them the command of the less disciplined Italians, with whom, he believed, they could not venture to tamper. He himself assumed the lead of the Northmen—and, despite themselves, they were fascinated by his artful, yet dignified affability, and the personal courage he displayed in some sallies of the besieged Barons. But as the huntsmen upon all the subtlest windings of their prey,—so pressed the relentless and speeding Fate upon Cola di Rienzi !

CHAP. VI.

THE EVENTS GATHER TO THE END.

WHILE this the state of the camp of the Besiegers, Luca di Savelli and Stefanello Colonna were closeted with a stranger, who had privately entered Palestrina on the night before the Romans pitched their tents beneath its walls. This visitor, who might have somewhat passed his fortieth year, yet retained, scarcely diminished, the uncommon beauty of form and tenance for which his youth had been remarkable. But it was no longer that character of beauty which has been described in his first introduction to the reader. It was no longer the almost woman delicacy of

feature and complexion, or the high-born polish, and graceful suavity of manner, which distinguished Walter de Montreal: a life of vicissitude and war had at length done its work. His bearing was now abrupt and imperious, as that of one accustomed to rule wild spirits, and he had exchanged the grace of persuasion for the sternness of command. His athletic form had grown more spare and sinewy, and instead of the brow half shaded by fair and clustering curls, his forehead, though yet but slightly wrinkled, was completely bald at the temples: and by its unwonted height, increased the dignity and manliness of his aspect. The bloom of his complexion was faded, less by outward exposure than inward thought, into a bronzed and settled paleness; and his features seemed more marked and prominent, as the flesh had somewhat sunk from the contour of the cheek. Yet the change suited the change of age and circumstance; and if the Provençal now less realized the idea of the brave and fair Knight errant, he but looked the more what the Knight errant had become—the sagacious councillor and the mighty leader.

“ You must be aware,” said Montreal, continuing a discourse which appeared to have made great impression on his companions, “ that in this contest between yourselves and the Senator, I alone hold the balance. Rienzi is utterly in my power—my brothers, the leaders of his army, myself his creditor. It rests with me to secure him on the throne, or to send him to the scaffold. I have but to give the order, and the Grand Company enter Rome; but without their agency, methinks if you keep faith with me, our purpose can be effected.”

“ In the meanwhile, Palestrina is besieged by your brothers !” said Stefanello sharply.

“ But they have my orders to waste their time before its walls. Do you not see, that by this very siege, fruitless, as, if I will, it shall be, Rienzi loses fame abroad, and popularity in Rome ?”

“ Sir Knight,” said Luca di Savelli, “ you speak as a man versed in the profound policy of the times, and under all the circumstances which menace us, your proposal seems but fitting and reasonable. On the one hand, you undertake to restore us and the other Barons to Rome ;

and to give Rienzi to the Staircase of the Lion—”

“Not so, not so,” replied Montreal quickly, “I will consent either so to subdue and cripple his power, as to render him a puppet in our hands, a mere shadow of authority—Or, if his proud spirit chafe at its cage, to give it once more liberty amongst the wilds of Germany. I would fetter or banish him, but not destroy; unless (added Montreal, after a moment’s pause) fate absolutely drives us to it. Power should not demand victims; but to secure it, victims may be necessary.”

“I understand your refinements,” said Luca di Savelli, with his icy smile, “and am satisfied. The Barons once restored, our palaces once more manned, and I am willing to take the chance of the Senator’s longevity. This service you promise to effect?”

“I do.”

“And in return, you demand our assent to your enjoying the rank of Podesta for five years.”

“You say right.”

“I, for one, accede to the terms,” said the

Savelli: "there is my hand; I am wearied of these brawls, even amongst ourselves, and think that a Foreign Ruler may best enforce order: the more especially, if like you, Sir Knight, one whose birth and renown are such as to make him comprehend the difference between Barons and plebeians."

"For my part," said Stefanello, "I feel that we have but a choice of evils—I like not a foreign Podesta; but I like a plebeian Senator, still less;—there too is my hand, Sir Knight."

"Noble Signors," said Montreal, after a short pause, and turning his piercing gaze from one to the other with great deliberation, "our compact is sealed; one word by way of codicil. Walter de Montreal is no Count Pepin of Minorbino! Once before, little dreaming, I own, that the victory would be so facile, I entrusted your cause and mine to a Deputy; your cause he promoted, mine he lost. He drove out the Tribune, and then suffered the Barons to banish himself. This time I see to my own affairs; and, mark you, I have learnt in the Grand Company one lesson; viz. never to pardon spy, or deser-

ter of whatever rank. Your forgiveness for the hint. Let us change the theme. So ye detain in your fortress, my old friend the Baron di Castello."

"Ay," said Luca di Savelli; for Stefanello, stung by Montreal's threat, which he dared not openly resent, preserved a sullen silence; "Ay, he is one Noble the less to the Senator's Council."

"You act wisely. I know his views and temper; noble, but dangerous to our interests. Use him well, I entreat you, he may hereafter serve us. And now, my Lords, my eyes are weary, suffer me to retire. Pleasant dreams of the New Revolution to us all!"

"By your leave, noble Montreal, we will attend you to your couch," said Luca di Savelli.

"By my troth, and ye shall not. I am no Tribune to have great Signors for my pages; but a plain gentleman, and a hardy soldier; your attendants will conduct me to whatever chamber your hospitality assigns to one, who could sleep soundly beneath the rudest hedge under your open skies."

Savelli, however, insisted on conducting the Podesta that was to be, to his apartment. He then returned to Stefanello, whom he found pacing the saloon with long and disordered strides.

“What have we done, Savelli?” said he quickly; “sold our city to a barbarian!”

“Sold!” said Savelli; “to my mind it is the other part of the contract in which we have played our share. We have bought, Colonna, not sold—bought our lives from yon army—bought our power—our fortunes—our castles, from the demagogue Senator—bought, what is better than all, triumph and revenge. Tush, Colonna, see you not that if we had balked this great warrior, we had perished. Leagued with the Senator, the Grand Company would have marched to Rome, and whether Montreal assisted or murdered Rienzi, (for methinks he is a Romulus, who would brook no Remus,) *we* had equally been undone. *Now*, we have made our own terms, and our shares are equal. Nay, the first steps to be taken, are in our favour.

Rienzi is to be snared, and *we* are to enter Rome."

"And then the Provençal is to be Despot of the city."

"Podesta, if you please. Podestas who offend the people, are often banished and sometimes stoned—Podestas who insult the nobles, are often stilettoed and sometimes poisoned," said Savelli. 'Sufficient for the hour is the evil thereof.' Meanwhile, say nothing to the bear Orsini. Such men mar all wisdom. Come, cheer thee, Stefanello."

"Luca di Savelli, you have not such a stake in Rome as I have," said the young Lord, haughtily; "no Podesta can take from *you* the rank of the first Signor of the Italian metropolis!"

"An you had said so to the Orsini, there would have been drawing of swords," said Savelli. "But cheer thee, I say; is not our first care to destroy Rienzi, and then, between the death of one foe and the rise of another, are there not such preventives as Eccelino Romano has taught to

wary men? Cheer thee, I say; and next year, if we but hold together, Stefanello Colonna and Luca di Savelli will be joint Senators of Rome,—and these great men food for worms!”

While thus conferred the Barons, Montreal, ere he retired to rest, stood gazing from the open lattice of his chamber, over the landscape below, which slept in the autumnal moonlight, while at a distance gleamed, pale and steady, the lights round the encampment of the besiegers.

“ Wide plains and broad valleys,” thought the warrior, “ soon shall ye repose in peace beneath a new sway, against which no petty tyrant shall dare rebel. And ye, white walls of canvass, even while I gaze upon ye, admonish me how realms are won. Even as, of old, from the Nomad tents was built up the stately Babylon,* that “ was not till the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness;” so from the new Ishmaelites of Europe, shall a race, undreamt of now, be founded; and the camp of yesterday, be the city of to-morrow. Verily,

* Isaiah, c. xxiii.

when, for one soft offence, the Pontiff thrust me from the bosom of the church, little guest he what enemy he raised to Rome ! How solemn is the night—how still the heavens and earth—the very stars are as hushed, as if intent on the events that are to pass below ! So solemn and so still, feels mine own spirit, and an awe unknown till now, warns me that I approach the crisis of my daring fate !”

BOOK X.

THE LION OF BASALT.

Ora voglio contare la morte del Tribuno.

VIT. DI COLA DI RIENZI, lib. ii. cap. xxiv.

CHAP. I.

THE CONJUNCTION OF HOSTILE PLANETS IN THE
HOUSE OF DEATH.

ON the fourth day of the siege, and after beating back to those almost impregnable walls, the soldiery of the Barons, headed by the Prince of the Orsini, whom Rienzi engaged, and wounded with his own hand, the Senator returned to his tent, where despatches from Rome awaited him. He ran his eye hastily over them, till he came to the last; yet each contained news that might have longer delayed the eye of a man less inured to danger. From one he learned that Albornoz, whose blessing had confirmed to him the rank of Senator, had received with special favour the

messengers of the Orsini and Colonna. He knew that the Cardinal, whose views connected him with the Roman Patricians, desired his downfall ; but he feared not Albornoz : perhaps in his secret heart he wished that any open aggression from the Pontiff's legate, might throw him wholly on the people.

He learnt further, that, short as had been his absence, Pandulfo di Guido had twice addressed the populace, not in favour of the Senator, but in artful regrets of the loss to the trade of Rome in the absence of her wealthiest nobles.

“ For this, then, he has deserted me,” said Rienzi to himself. “ Let him beware !”

The tidings contained in the next touched him home. Walter de Montreal had openly arrived in Rome. The grasping and lawless bandit, whose rapine filled with a robber's booty every bank in Europe—whose Company was the army of a King—whose ambition, vast, unprincipled, and profound, he so well knew—whose brothers were in his camp—their treason already more than suspected ;—Walter de Montreal was in Rome !

The Senator remained perfectly aghast at this new peril ; and then said, setting his teeth as in a vice,

“ Wild tiger, thou art in the Lion’s den !” Then pausing, he broke out again, “ One false step, Walter de Montreal, and all the mailed hands of the Grand Company shall not pluck thee from the abyss ! But what can I do ? Return to Rome—the plans of Montreal unpenetrated—no accusation against him ! On what pretence can I with honour raise the siege ? To leave Palestrina, is to give a triumph to the Barons—to abandon Adrian, to degrade my cause. Yet while away from Rome, every hour breeds treason and danger. Pandolfo, Albornoz, Montreal—all are at work against me. A keen and trusty spy, now ;—ha, well thought of—Villani ! —What ho—Angelo Villani !”

The young Chamberlain appeared.

“ I think,” said Rienzi, “ to have often heard, that thou art an orphan ?”

“ True, my Lord ; the old Augustine nun who reared my boyhood, has told me again and again, that my parents are dead. Both noble,

my Lord, but I am the child of shame. And I say it often, and think of it ever, in order to make Angelo Villani remember that he has a name to win."

"Young man; serve me as you have served, and if I live, you shall have no need to call yourself an orphan. Mark me! I want a friend—the Senator of Rome wants a friend—only one friend—gentle Heaven! only one!"

Angelo sank on his knee, and kissed the mantle of his Lord.

"Say a follower. I am too mean to be Ri-enzi's friend."

"Too mean!—go to!—there is nothing mean before God, unless it be a base soul under high titles. With me, boy, there is but one nobility, and Nature signs its charter. Listen: thou hearest daily of Walter de Montreal, brother to these Provençals—Great captain of great robbers."

"Ay, and I have seen him, my Lord."

"Well, then, he is at Rome. Some daring thought—some well-supported and deep-schemed villany, could alone make that bandit venture

openly into an Italian city, whose territories he ravaged by fire and sword a few months back. But his brothers have lent me money—assisted my return;—for their own ends, it is true; but the seeming obligation gives them real power. These Northern swordmen would cut my throat if the Great Captain bade them. He counts on my supposed weakness. I know him of old. I suspect—nay I read, his projects; but I cannot prove them. Without proof I cannot desert Palestrina in order to accuse and seize him. Thou art shrewd, thoughtful, acute;—couldst thou go to Rome?—watch day and night his movements—see if he receive messengers from Albornoze or the Barons—if he confer with Pandolfo di Guido;—watch his lodgement, I say, night and day. He affects no concealment: your task will be less difficult than it seems. Apprise the Signora of all you learn. Give me your news daily. Will you undertake this mission?”

“I will, my Lord.”

“To horse, then, quick!—and mind—save the wife of my bosom, I have no confidant at Rome.”

CHAP. II.

MONTREAL AT ROME—HIS RECEPTION OF ANGELO
VILLANI.

THE danger that threatened Rienzi by the arrival of Montreal was indeed formidable. The Knight of St. John, having marched his army into Lombardy, had placed it at the disposal of the Venetian State in its war with the Archbishop of Milan. For this service he received an immense sum; while he provided winter-quarters for his troop, for whom he proposed ample work in the ensuing spring. Leaving Palestrina secretly and in disguise; with but a slender train, which met him at Tivoli, Montreal repaired to Rome. His ostensible object was,

partly to congratulate the Senator on his return, partly to receive the monies lent to Rienzi by his brother.

His secret object we have partly seen; but not contented with the support of the Barons, he trusted, by the corrupting means of his enormous wealth, to form a third party in support of his own ulterior designs. Wealth, indeed, in that age and in that land, was scarcely less the purchaser of diadems than it had been in the later days of the Roman Empire. And in many a city torn by hereditary feuds, the hatred of faction rose to that extent, that a foreign tyrant, willing and able to expel one party, might obtain at least the temporary submission of the other. His after success was greatly in proportion as he could maintain his state by a force which was independent of the citizens, and a treasury which did not require the odious recruit of taxes. But more avaricious than ambitious, more cruel than firm, it was by griping exaction, or unnecessary bloodshed, that such usurpers usually fell.

Montreal, who had scanned such revolutions

with a calm and investigating eye, trusted that he should be enabled to avoid both these errors: and as the reader has already seen, he had formed the vast and sagacious project of consolidating his usurpation by an utterly new race of nobles, who, serving him by the feudal tenure of the North, and ever ready to protect him, because in so doing they protected their own interests,—should assist to erect, not the rotten and unsupported fabric of a single tyranny, but the strong fortress of a new, hardy, and compact aristocratic state. Thus had the great dynasties of the North been founded; and the King, though seemingly curbed by the Barons, was in reality supported by a common interest, whether against a subdued population or a foreign invasion.

Such were the vast schemes—extending into yet wider fields of glory and conquest, bounded only by the Alps—with which the Captain of the Grand Company beheld the columns and arches of the Seven-hilled City.

No fear disturbed the long current of his thoughts. His brothers were the leaders of Rienzi's hireling army—that army were his crea-

tures. Over Rienzi himself he assumed the right of a creditor. Thus against one party he deemed himself secure. For the friends of the Pope, he had supported himself with private, though cautious, letters from Albornoz, who desired only to make use of him for the return of the Roman Barons; and with the heads of the latter we have already witnessed his negotiations. Thus was he fitted, as he thought, to examine, to tamper with all parties, and to select from each the materials necessary for his own objects.

The open appearance of Montreal excited in Rome no inconsiderable sensation. The friends of the Barons gave out that Rienzi was in league with the Grand Company; and that he was to sell the imperial city to the plunder and pillage of Barbarian robbers. The effrontery with which Montreal (against whom, more than once, the Pontiff had thundered his bulls) appeared in the metropolitan city of the Church,—was made yet more insolent by the recollection of that stern justice which had led the Tribune to declare open war against all the robbers of

Italy: and this audacity was linked with the obvious reflection, that the brothers of the bold Provençal were the instruments of Rienzi's return. So quickly spread suspicion through the city, that Montreal's presence alone would in a few weeks have sufficed to ruin the Senator. Meanwhile, the natural boldness of Montreal silenced every whisper of prudence; and blinded by the dazzle of his hopes, the Knight of St. John, as if to give double importance to his coming, took up his residence in a sumptuous palace, and his retinue rivalled, in the splendour of garb and pomp, the display of Rienzi himself in his earlier and more brilliant power.

Amidst the growing excitement, Angelo Villani arrived at Rome. The character of this young man had been formed by his peculiar circumstances. He possessed qualities which often stamp the Illegitimate as with a common nature. He was insolent—like most of those who hold a doubtful rank; and while ashamed of his bastardy, was arrogant of the supposed nobility of his unknown parentage. The universal ferment and agitation of Italy at that day

rendered ambition the most common of all the passions, and thus ambition, in all its many shades and varieties, forces itself into our delineations of character in this history. Though not for Angelo Villani were the dreams of the more lofty and generous order of that sublime infirmity, he was strongly incited by the desire and resolve to *rise*. He had warm affections, and grateful impulses; and his fidelity to his patron had been carried to a virtue: but from his irregulated and desultory education, and the reckless profligacy of those with whom, in anti-chambers and guard-rooms, much of his youth had been past, he had neither high principles nor an enlightened honour. Like most Italians, cunning and shrewd, he scrupled not at any deceit that served a purpose or a friend. His strong attachment to Rienzi had been unconsciously increased by the gratification of pride and vanity—flattered by the favour of so celebrated a man. Both self-interest and attachment urged him to every effort to promote the views and safety of one at once his benefactor and patron; and on undertaking his present

mission, his only thought was to fulfil it with the most complete success. Far more brave and daring than was common with Italians, something of the hardihood of an Ultra-Montone race, gave nerve and vigour to his craft; and from what his art suggested, his courage never shrunk.

When Rienzi had first detailed to him the objects of his present task, he instantly called to mind his adventure with the tall soldier in the crowd at Avignon. "If ever thou wantest a friend, seek him in Walter de Montreal," were words that had often rung in his ear, and they now recurred to him with prophetic distinctness. He had no doubt that it was Montreal himself whom he had seen. Why the Great Captain should have taken this interest in him, Angelo little troubled himself to consider. Most probably it was but a crafty pretence—one of the common means by which the Chief of the Grand Company attracted to himself the youths of Italy, as well as the warriors of the North. He only thought now how he could turn the Knight's promise to account. What more easy

than to present himself to Montreal—remind him of the words—enter his service—and thus effectually watch his conduct? The office of spy was not that which would have pleased every mind, but it shocked not the fastidiousness of Angelo Villani; and the fearful hatred with which his patron had often spoken of the avaricious and barbarian robber—the scourge of his native land,—had inoculated the young man, who had much of the arrogant and mock patriotism of the Romans, with a similar sentiment. More vindictive even than grateful, he bore too a secret grudge against Montreal's brothers, whose rough address had often wounded his pride; and, more than all, his early recollections of the fear and execration in which Ursula seemed ever to hold the terrible Frà Moreale, impressed him with a vague belief of some ancient wrong to himself or his race, perpetrated by the Provençal, which he was not ill-pleased to have the occasion to avenge. In truth, the words of Ursula, mystic and dark as they were in their denunciation, had left upon Villani's boyish impressions an

unaccountable feeling of antipathy and vindictive hatred to the man it was now his object to betray. For the rest, every device seemed to him decorous and justifiable, so that it saved his master, served his country, and advanced himself.

Montreal was alone in his chamber when it was announced to him that a young Italian craved an audience. Professionally open to access, he forthwith gave admission to the applicant.

Montreal instantly recognised the page he had encountered at Avignon; and when Angelo Villani said, with easy boldness, "I have come to remind the Knight of St. John of a promise——"

Montreal interrupted him with cordial frankness—"Thou needst not—I remember it. Dost thou now require my friendship?"

"I do, noble Knight!" answered Angelo—"I know not where else to seek a patron."

"Canst thou read and write? I fear me not."

"I have been taught those arts," replied Villani.

“ It is well. Is your birth gentle ?”

“ It is.”

“ Better still ;—your name ?”

“ Angelo Villani.”

“ I take your blue eyes and low broad brow,” said Montreal, with a slight sigh, “ in pledge of your truth. Henceforth, Angelo Villani, you are in the list of my Secretaries. Another time thou shalt tell me more of thyself. Your service dates from this day. For the rest, no man ever wanted wealth who served Walter de Montreal ; nor advancement, if he served him faithfully. My closet, through yonder door, is your waiting-room. Ask for, and send hither, Lusignan of Lyons ; he is my chief scribe, and will see to thy comforts, and instruct thee in thy business.”

Angelo withdrew—Montreal’s eye followed him.

“ A strange likeness !” said he, musingly and sadly ; “ my heart leaps to that boy !”

CHAP. III.

MONTREAL'S BANQUET.

SOME few days after the date of the last chapter, Rienzi received news from Rome, which seemed to produce on him a joyous and elated excitement. His troops still lay before Palestrina, and still the banners of the Barons waved over its unconquered walls. In truth, the Italians employed half their time in brawls amongst themselves; the Velletretani had feuds with the people of Tivoli, and the Romans were still afraid of conquering the Barons;—"The hornet," said they, "stings worse after he is dead; and neither an Orsini, a Savelli, nor a Colonna, was ever known to forgive."

Again and again had the Captains of his army assured the indignant Senator that the

fortress was impregnable, and that time and money were idly wasted upon the siege. Rienzi knew better, but he concealed his thoughts.

He now summoned to his tent the brothers of Provence, and announced to them his intention of returning instantly to Rome. "The mercenaries shall continue the siege under our Lieutenant, and you, with my Roman Legion, shall accompany me. Your brother Sir Walter, and I, both want your presence; we have affairs to arrange between us. After a few days I shall raise recruits in the city, and return."

This was what the brothers desired—they approved, with evident joy, the Senator's proposition.

Rienzi next sent for the Lieutenant of his body guard, the same Riccardo Annibaldi whom the reader will remember in the earlier part of this work, as the antagonist of Montreal's lance. This young man—one of the few nobles who espoused the cause of the Senator—had evinced great courage and military ability, and promised fair (should Fate spare his life*) to become one of the best Captains of his time.

* It appears that this was the same Annibaldi who

“Dear Annibaldi,” said Rienzi; “at length I can fulfil the project on which we have privately conferred. I take with me to Rome the two Provençal Captains—I leave you Chief of the army. Palestrina will yield now—eh!—ha, ha, ha!—Palestrina will yield now!”

“By my right hand, I think so, Senator,” replied Annibaldi. “These men have hitherto only stirred up quarrels amongst ourselves, and if not cowards are certainly traitors!”

“Hush, hush, hush! Traitors! The learned Arimbaldo, the brave Brettone, traitors!—Fie on it! No, no; they are very excellent, honourable men, but not lucky in the camp;—not lucky in the ‘camp—better speed to them in the city! And now to business.”

The Senator then detailed to Annibaldi the plan he himself had formed for taking the town, and the military skill of Annibaldi at once recognised its feasibility.

With his Roman troop, and Montreal’s brothers, one at either hand, Rienzi then departed to Rome.

was afterwards slain in an affray:—Petrarch lauds his valour and laments his fate.

That night Montreal gave a banquet to Pandulfo di Guido, and to certain of the principal citizens, whom one by one he had already sounded, and found hollow at heart to the cause of the Senator.

Pandulfo sate at the right-hand of the Knight of St. John; and Montreal lavished upon him the most courteous attentions.

“Pledge me in this—it is from the Vale of Chiana, near Monte Pulciano,” said Montreal; “I think I have heard bookmen say (you know, Signor Pandulfo, we ought all to be bookmen now!) that the site was renowned of old. In truth the wine hath a racy flavour.”

“I hear,” said Bruttini, one of the lesser Barons, (a staunch friend to the Colonna,) “that in this respect the innkeeper’s son has put his book-learning to some use: he knows every place where the vine grows richest.”

“What! the Senator is turned wine-bibber,” said Montreal, quaffing a vast goblet full; “that must unfit him for business—’tis a pity.”

“Verily, yes,” said Pandulfo; “a man at the

head of a state should be temperate.—I mix all my wine.”

“ Ah,” whispered Montreal, “ if your calm good sense ruled Rome, then indeed the metropolis of Italy might taste of peace. Signor Vivaldi,”—and the host turned towards a wealthy draper,—“ these disturbances are bad for trade.”

“ Very, very,” groaned the draper.

“ The Barons are your best customers,” quoth the minor noble.

“ Much, much !” said the draper.

“ ’Tis a pity that they are thus roughly expelled,” said Montreal, in a melancholy tone. “ Would it not be possible, if the Senator (*I* drink his health) were less rash—less zealous, rather—to unite free institutions with the return of the Barons?—*such* should be the task of a truly wise statesman !”

“ It surely might be possible,” returned Vivaldi; “ the Savelli alone spend more with me than all the rest of Rome.”

“ I know not if it be possible,” said Bruttini, “ but I do know that it is an outrage to all de-

corum that an innkeeper's son should be enabled to make a solitude of the palaces of Rome."

"It certainly seems to indicate too vulgar a desire of mob favour," said Montreal. "However, I trust we shall harmonize all these differences. Rienzi, perhaps — nay, doubtless, *means* well!"

"I would," said Vivaldi, who had received his cue, "that we might form a mixed constitution—plebeians and patricians, each in their separate order."

"But," said Montreal, gravely, "so new an experiment would demand great physical force."

"Why, true; but we might call in an umpire—a foreigner who had no interest in either faction—who might protect the new Buono Stato—a Podesta, as we have done before—Brancaleone, for instance. How well and wisely he ruled! that was a golden age for Rome. A Podesta for ever!—that's my theory."

"You need not seek far for the president of your council," said Montreal, smiling at Pan-

dulfo; "a citizen at once popular, well-born, and wealthy, may be found at my right-hand."

Pandulfo hemmed, and coloured.

Montreal proceeded. "A committee of trades might furnish an honourable employment to Signor Vivaldi; and the treatment of all foreign affairs—the employment of armies, &c., might be left to the Barons, with a more open competition, Signor di Bruttini, to the Barons of the second order than has hitherto been conceded to their birth and importance. Sirs, will you taste the Malvoisie?"

"Still," said Vivaldi, after a pause—(Vivaldi anticipated at least the supplying with cloth the whole of the Grand Company)—"still, such a moderate and well-digested constitution would never be acceded to by Rienzi."

"Why should it? what need of Rienzi?" exclaimed Bruttini. "Rienzi may take another trip to Bohemia."

"Gently, gently," said Montreal; "I do not despair. All open violence against the Senator would strengthen his power. No, no, humble

him--admit the Barons, and then insist on your own terms. Between the two factions you might then establish a fitting balance. And in order to keep your new constitution from the encroachment of either extreme, there *are* warriors and knights too, who for a certain rank in the great city of Rome would maintain horse and foot at its service. We Ultra-Montanes are often harshly judged; we are wanderers and Ishmaelites solely, because we have no honourable place of rest. Now if *I*—”

“Ay, if you, noble Montreal!” said Vivaldi.

The company remained hushed in breathless attention, when suddenly there was heard—deep, solemn, muffled—the great bell of the Capitol!

“Hark!” said Vivaldi, “the bell: it tolls for execution: an unwonted hour!”

“Sure, the Senator has not returned!” exclaimed Pandulfo di Guido, turning pale.

“No, no,” quoth Bruttini, “it is but a robber, caught two nights ago in Romagna. I heard that he was to die to-night.”

At the word “robber,” Montreal changed countenance slightly. The wine circulated—the

bell continued to toll—its suddenness over, it ceased to alarm. Conversation flowed again.

“What were you saying, Sir Knight?” said Vivaldi.

“Why, let me think on’t;—oh, speaking of the necessity of supporting a new state by force, I said, that if *I*—”

“Ah, that was it,” quoth Bruttini, thumping the table.

“If *I* were summoned to your aid—summoned, mind ye, and absolved by the Pope’s Legate of my former sins—(they weigh heavily on me, gentles,) I would myself guard your city from foreign foe and civil disturbance, with my gallant swordsmen. Not a Roman citizen should contribute a ‘denaro’ to the cost.”

“*Viva Frà Moreale!*” cried Bruttini, and the shout was echoed by all the boon companions.

“Enough for me,” continued Montreal, “to expiate my offences. Ye know, gentlemen, my order is vowed to God and the Church—a warrior-monk am I! Enough for me to expiate my offences, I say, in the defence of the Holy City.

Yet I too have my private and more earthly views, —who is above them? I—the bell changes its note !”

“ It is but the change that preludes execution—the poor robber is about to die !”

Montreal crossed himself, and resumed—
“ I am a knight and a noble,” said he proudly ;
“ the profession I have followed is that of arms ;
but—I will not disguise it—mine equals have regarded me as one who has stained his’scutcheon by too reckless a pursuit of glory and of gain. I wish to reconcile myself with my order—to purchase a new name—to vindicate myself to the Grand Master and the Pontiff. I have had hints, gentles, hints, that I might best promote my interest by restoring order to the Papal metropolis. The Legate Albornoz (here is his letter) recommends me to keep watch upon the Senator.”

“ Surely,” interrupted Pandulfo, “ I hear steps below.”

“ The mob going to the robber’s execution,” said Bruttini ; “ proceed, Sir Knight !”

“ And,” continued Montreal, surveying his audience before he proceeded farther, “ what

think ye—(I do but ask your opinion, wiser than mine)—what think ye, as a fitting precaution against too arbitrary a power in the Senator—what think ye of the return of the Colonna, and the bold Barons of Palestrina?”

“Here’s to their health,” cried Vivaldi, rising.

As by a sudden impulse, the company rose. “To the health of the besieged Barons,” was shouted loud.

“Next, what if—(I do but humbly suggest)—what if you gave the Senator a colleague? it is no affront to him. It was but as yesterday that one of the Colonna who was Senator received a colleague in Bertoldo Orsini.”

“A most wise precaution,” cried Vivaldi. “And where a colleague like Pandulfo di Guido?”

“Viva Pandulfo di Guido!” cried the guests, and again their goblets were drained to the bottom.

“And if in this I can assist ye by fair words with the Senator, (ye know he owes me monies—my brothers have served him,) command Walter de Montreal.”

“And if fair words fail,” said Vivaldi.

“The Grand Company—(heed me, *ye* are the councillors)—the Grand Company is accustomed to forced marches !”

“Viva Frà Moreale,” cried Bruttini and Vivaldi, simultaneously. A health to all—my friends ;” continued Bruttini, “a health to the Barons, Rome’s old friends ; to Pandulfo di Guido, the Senator’s new colleague ; and to Frà Moreale, —Rome’s new Podesta.”

“The bell has ceased ;” said Vivaldi, putting down his goblet.

“Heaven have mercy on the robber !” added Bruttini.

Scarce had he spoken, ere three taps were heard at the door—the guests looked at each other in dumb amaze.

“New guests !” said Montreal. “I asked some trusty friends to join us this evening. By my faith they are welcome ! Enter !”

The door opened slowly—three by three entered in complete armour—the guards of the Senator. On they marched, regular and speechless. They surrounded the festive board—they filled the spacious hall, and the lights of the

banquet were reflected upon their corselets as on a wall of steel.

Not a syllable was uttered by the feasters, they were as if turned to stone. Presently the guards gave way, and Rienzi himself appeared. He approached the table, and folding his arms, turned his gaze deliberately from guest to guest, till, at last, his eyes rested on Montreal, who had also risen, and who alone of the party had recovered the amaze of the moment.

And there, as these two men, each so celebrated, so proud, able, and ambitious, stood, front to front—it was literally as if the rival Spirits of Force and Intellect, Order and Strife, of the Falchion and the Fasces—the Antagonist Principles by which empires are ruled and empires overthrown, had met together, incarnate and opposed. They stood, both silent,—as if fascinated by each other's gaze,—loftier in stature, and nobler in presence than all around.

Montreal spoke first, and with a forced smile.

“Senator of Rome!—dare I believe that my poor banquet tempts thee, and may I trust that these armed men are a graceful compliment to one to whom arms have been a pastime?”

Rienzi answered not, but waved his hand to his guards. Montreal was siezed on the instant. Again he surveyed the guests—as a bird from the rattle-snake shrunk Pandulfo di Guido, trembling, motionless, aghast, from the glittering eye of the Senator. Slowly Rienzi raised his fatal hand towards the unhappy citizen—Pandulfo saw,—felt his doom,—shrieked,—and fell senseless in the arms of the soldiers.

One other and rapid glance cast the Senator round the board, and then with a disdainful smile, as if anxious for no meaner prey, turned away. Not a breath had hitherto passed his lips—all had been dumb show—and his grim silence had imparted a more freezing terror to his unguessed-for apparition. Only, when he reached the door, he turned back, gazed upon the Knight of St. John's bold and undaunted face, and said, almost in a whisper, "Walter de Montreal!—you heard the death-knell!"

CHAP. IV.

THE SENTENCE OF WALTER DE MONTREAL.

IN silence the Captain of the Grand Company was borne to the prison of the Capitol. In the same building lodged the rivals for the government of Rome; the one occupied the prison, the other the palace. The guards forbore the ceremony of fetters, and leaving a lamp on the table, Montreal perceived he was not alone,—his brothers had preceded him.

“Ye are happily met,” said the Knight of St. John; “we have passed together pleasanter nights than this is likely to be.”

“Can you jest, Walter,” said Arimbaldo, half-weeping. “Know you not that our doom is fixed? Death scowls upon us.”

“Death!” repeated Montreal, and for the

first time his countenance changed ; perhaps for the first time in his life he felt the thrill and agony of fear.

“Death !” he repeated again. “Impossible ! He dare not—Brettone—the soldiers, the Northmen !—they will mutiny, they will pluck us back from the grasp of the headsman !”

“Cast from you so vain a hope,” said Brettone, sullenly ; “the soldiers are encamped at Palestrina.”

“How ! Dolt—fool ! Came you then to Rome *alone* ! Are we *alone* with this dread man ?”

“*You* are the dolt. Why came you hither ?” answered the brother.

“Why, indeed ! but that I knew thou wast the Captain of the army ; and—but you said right—the folly is mine, to have played against the crafty Tribune so unequal a brain as thine. Enough ! Reproaches are idle. When were ye arrested ?”

“At dusk—the instant we entered the gates of Rome. Rienzi entered privately.”

“Humph ! What can he know against me ? Who can have betrayed me ? My secretaries

are tried—all trustworthy—except that youth, and he so seemingly zealous—that Angelo Villani !”

“Villani—Angelo Villani,” cried the brothers in a breath. “Hast thou confided aught to him?”

“Why, I fear he must have seen—at least in part—my correspondence with you, and with the Barons—he was among my scribes. Know you aught of him?”

“Walter—Heaven hath demented you,” returned Brettone, “Angelo Villani is the favourite menial of the Senator.”

“Those eyes deceived me, then,” muttered Montreal, solemnly and shuddering; “and, as if *her* ghost had returned to earth, God smites me, from the grave !”

There was a long silence. At length Montreal, whose bold and sanguine temper was never long clouded, spoke again.

“Are the Senator’s coffers full?—But that is impossible.”

“Bare as a Dominican’s.”

“We are saved then. He shall name his price for our heads. Money must be more useful to him than blood.”

And, as if with that thought all further meditation were rendered unnecessary, Montreal doffed his mantle, uttered a short prayer, and flung himself on a pallet in a corner of the cell.

"I have slept on worse beds," said the Knight, stretching himself; and in a few minutes he was fast asleep.

The brothers listened to his deep-drawn, but regular breathing, with envy and wonder, but they were in no mood to converse. Still and speechless, they sate like statues beside the sleeper. Time passed on, and the first cold air of the hour that succeeds to midnight crept through the bars of their cell. The bolts crashed, the door opened, six men at arms entered, passed the brothers, and one of them touched Montreal.

"Ha !" said he, still sleeping, but turning round. "Ha !" said he, in the soft Provençal tongue, "sweet Adeline, we will not rise yet—it is so long since we met !"

"What says he?" muttered the guard, shaking Montreal roughly. The Knight sprang up at once, and his hand grasped the head of his bed as for his sword. He stared round bewildered, rubbed

his eyes, and then gazing on the guard, became alive to the present.

“Ye are early risers in the Capitol,” said he.
“What want ye of me?”

“*It* waits you!”

“*It!* What?” said Montreal.

“The rack!” replied the soldier, with a malignant scowl.

The Great Captain said not a word. He looked for one moment at the six swordsmen, as if measuring his single strength against theirs. His eye then wandered round the room. The rudest bar of iron would have been dearer to him than he had ever yet found the proofest steel of Milan. He completed his survey with a sigh, threw his mantle over his shoulders, nodded at his brethren, and followed the guard.

In a hall of the Capitol, hung with the ominous silk of white rays on a blood-red ground, sate Rienzi and his councillors. Over a recess was drawn a black curtain.

“Walter de Montreal,” said a small man at the foot of the table; “Knight of the illustrious order of St. John of Jerusalem.”

“And Captain of the Grand Company!” added the prisoner in a firm voice.

“You stand accused of divers counts:—robbery and murder, in Tuscany, Romagna, and Apulia——,”

“For robbery and murder, brave men and belted Knights,” said Montreal, drawing himself up, “would use the words ‘war and victory.’ To those charges I plead guilty!—Proceed.”

“You are next charged of treasonable conspiracy against the liberties of Rome for the restoration of the proscribed Barons—and with traitorous correspondence with Stefanello Colonna at Palestrina.”

“My accuser?”

“Step forth, Angelo Villani!”

“*You* are my betrayer, then?” said Montreal steadily. “I deserved this. I beseech you, Senator of Rome, let this young man retire. I confess my correspondence with the Colonna, and my desire to restore the Barons.”

Rienzi motioned to Villani, who bowed and withdrew.

“There rests only then for you, Walter de Montreal, to relate fully and faithfully, the details of your conspiracy.”

“That is impossible,” replied Montreal carelessly.

“And why?”

“Because, doing as I please with my own life, I will not betray the lives of others.”

“Bethink thee—thou wouldst have betrayed the life of thy judge!”

“Not betrayed—thou didst not trust me.”

“The law, Walter de Montreal, hath sharp inquisitors—behold!”

The black curtain was drawn aside, and the eye of Montreal rested on the executioner and the rack! His proud breast heaved indignantly.

“Senator of Rome,” said he, “these instruments are for serfs and villeins. I have been a warrior and a leader; life and death have been in my hands—I have used them as I listed; but to mine equal and my foe, I never proffered the insult of the rack.”

A bright and approving expression settled on the lofty brow of the Senator.

“ Sir Walter de Montreal,” said he, gravely, but with some courteous respect, “ your answer is that which rises naturally to the lips of brave men. But learn from me, whom fortune hath made thy judge, that no more for serf and villein, than for Knight and Noble, are such instruments the engines of law, or the criteria of truth. I yielded but to the desire of these reverend Councillors, to test thy nerves. But wert thou the meanest peasant of the Campagna, before my judgment-seat, thou needst not apprehend the torture. Walter de Montreal, amongst the Princes of Italy thou hast known, amongst the Roman Barons thou wouldst have aided, is there one who could make that boast ?”

“ I desired only,” said Montreal, with some hesitation, “ to join the Barons *with* thee ; nor did I intrigue against thy *life* !”

Rienzi frowned—“ Enough,” he said, hastily, “ Knight of St. John, I *know* thy secret projects, subterfuge and evasion neither befit nor avail thee. If thou didst not intrigue against my life, thou didst intrigue against the life of Rome. Thou

hast but one favour left to demand on earth, it is the manner of thy death."

Montreal's lip worked convulsively.

"Senator," said he, in a low voice, "may I crave audience with thee *alone* for one minute?"

The Councillors looked up.

"My Lord," whispered the eldest of them, "doubtless he hath concealed weapons—trust him not."

"Prisoner," returned Rienzi, after a moment's pause; "if you seek for mercy your request is idle, and before my coadjutors I have no secret;—speak out what thou hast to say!"

"Yet listen to me," said the prisoner, folding his arms; "it concerns not my life, but Rome's welfare."

"Then," said Rienzi, in an altered tone, "thy request is granted. Thou mayst add to thy guilt the design of the assassin, but for Rome I would dare greater danger."

So saying, he motioned to the Councillors, who slowly withdrew by the door which had admitted Villani, while the guards retired to the farthest extremity of the hall.

“ Now, Walter de Montreal, be brief, thy time is short.”

“ Senator,” said Montreal, “ my life can but little profit you ; men will say that you destroyed your creditor in order to cancel your debt. Fix a sum upon my life, estimate it at the price of a monarch’s, every florin shall be paid to you, and your treasury will be filled for five years to come. If the ‘ *Buono stato* ’ depends on your government, what I have asked, your solicitude for Rome will not permit you to refuse.”

“ You mistake me, bold robber,” said Rienzi, sternly, “ your *treason* I could guard against, and therefore forgive ; your *ambition*, never. Mark me, I know you ! Place your hand on your heart and say whether, could we change places, you, as Rienzi, would suffer all the gold of earth to purchase the life of Walter de Montreal ? For men’s reading of my conduct, that must I bear ; for mine own reading, mine eyes must be purged from corruption. I am answerable to God for the trust of Rome. And Rome trembles while the head of the Grand Company

lives in the plotting brain and the daring heart of Walter de Montreal. Man—wealthy, great, and subtle as you are, your hours are numbered; with the rise of the sun you die !”

Montreal’s eyes, fixed upon the Senator’s face, saw hope was over; his pride and his fortitude returned to him.

“ We have wasted words,” said he, “ I played for a great stake, I have lost, and must pay the forfeit ! I am prepared. On the threshold of two worlds, the dark spirit of prophecy rushes into us. Lord Senator, I go before thee to announce—that in Heaven or Hell—ere many days be over, room must be given to one mightier than I am !”

As he spake, his form dilated, his eye glared; and Rienzi, cowering as never had he cowered before, shrunk back, and shaded his face with his hand.

“ The manner of your death ?” he asked, in a hollow voice.

“ The axe, it is that which befits knight and warrior. For thee, Senator, Fate hath a less noble death.”

“ Robber, be dumb !” cried Rienzi, passionately ; “ Guards, bear back the prisoner. At sun-rise, Montreal—”

“ *Sets* the sun of the scourge of Italy,” said the Knight, bitterly. “ Be it so. One request more ; the Knights of St. John claim affinity with the Augustine order ; grant me an Augustine confessor.”

“ It is granted ; and in return for thy denunciations, I, who can give thee no earthly mercy, will implore the Judge of all for pardon to thy soul !”

“ Senator, I have done with man’s mediation. My brethren ? Their deaths are not necessary to thy safety or thy revenge !”

Rienzi mused a moment : “ No,” said he, “ dangerous tools they were, but without the workman they may rust unharmed. They served me once, too. Prisoner, their lives are spared.”

CHAP. V.

THE DISCOVERY.

THE Council was broken up—Rienzi hastened to his own apartments. He met Villani by the way—he pressed the youth's hand affectionately. "You have saved Rome and me from great peril," said he; "the saints reward you!" Without waiting Villani's answer, he hurried on. Nina, anxious and perturbed, awaited him in their chamber.

"Not a-bed yet?" said he: "fie, Nina, even thy beauty will not stand these vigils."

"I could not rest till I had seen thee. I hear, (all Rome has heard it ere this,) that thou hast seized Walter de Montreal, and that he will perish by the headsman."

“The first robber that ever died so brave a death,” returned Rienzi, slowly unrobing himself.

“Cola, I have never crossed your schemes,—your policy, even by a suggestion. Enough for me to triumph in their success, to mourn for their failure. Now, I ask thee one request—spare me the life of this man.”

“Nina—”

“Hear me,—for thee I speak ! Despite his crimes, his valour and his genius have gained him admirers, even amongst his foes. Many a prince, many a state that secretly rejoices at his fall, will affect horror against his judge. Hear me farther: his brothers aided your return; the world will term you ungrateful. His brothers lent you monies, the world—(out on it !—) will term you——

“Hold !” interrupted the Senator. “All that thou sayest, my mind forestalled. But thou knowest me—to thee I have no disguise. No compact can bind Montreal’s faith—no mercy win his gratitude. Before his red right hand truth and justice are swept away. If I condemn

Montreal I incur disgrace and risk danger—granted. If I release him, ere the first showers of April, the chargers of the Northmen will neigh in the halls of the Capitol. Which shall I hazard in this alternative, myself or Rome? Ask me no more—to bed, to bed!”

“Couldst thou read my forebodings, Cola, mystic—gloomy—unaccountable!”

“Forebodings!—I have mine,” answered Rienzi sadly, gazing on space, as if his thoughts peopled it with spectres. Then raising his eyes to Heaven, he said with that fanatical energy which made much both of his strength and weakness—“Lord, mine at least not the sin of Saul! the Amalekite shall not be saved!”

While Rienzi enjoyed a short, troubled, and restless sleep, over which Nina watched—unslumbering, anxious, tearful, and oppressed with dark and terrible forewarnings—the accuser was more happy than the judge. The last dim thoughts that floated before the young mind of Angelo Villani, ere wrapt in sleep, were bright and sanguine. He felt no honourable remorse that he had entrapped the confidence of another—

he felt only that his scheme had prospered—that his mission had been fulfilled. The grateful words of Rienzi rang in his ear, and hopes of fortune and power, beneath the sway of the Roman Senator, lulled him into slumber, and coloured all his dreams.

Scarce, however, had he been two hours asleep, ere he was wakened by one of the attendants of the palace, himself half awake. “ Pardon me, Messere Villani,” said he, “ but there is a messenger below from the good Sister Ursula—he bids thee haste instantly to the Convent—she is sick unto death, and has tidings that crave thy immediate presence.”

Angelo, whose morbid susceptibility as to his parentage was ever excited by vague but ambitious hopes—started up, dressed hurriedly, and joining the messenger below, repaired to the Convent. In the court of the Capitol, and by the Staircase of the Lion, was already heard the noise of the workmen, and looking back, Villani beheld the scaffold, hung with black—sleeping cloudlike in the grey light of dawn—at the same time, the bell of the Capitol tolled

heavily. A pang shot athwart him. He hurried on—despite the immature earliness of the hour, he met groups of either sex, hastening along the streets to witness the execution of the redoubted Captain of the Grand Company. The Convent of the Augustines was at the farthest extremity of that city, even then so extensive, and the red light upon the hill tops already heralded the rising sun, ere the young man reached the venerable porch. His name obtained him instant admittance.

“Heaven grant,” said an old Nun, who conducted him through a long and winding passage, “that thou mayest bring comfort to the sick sister: she has pined for thee grievously since matins.”

In a cell apportioned to the reception of visitors, (from the outward world,) to such of the Sisterhood as received the necessary dispensation, sate the aged Nun. Angelo had only seen her once since his return to Rome, and since then disease had made rapid havoc on her form and features. And now, in her shroudlike garments and attenuated frame, she seemed by

the morning light, as a spectre whom day had surprised above the earth. She approached the youth, however, with a motion more elastic and rapid than seemed possible to her worn and ghastly form. "Thou art come," she said. "Well, well! This morning after matins, my confessor, an Augustine, who alone knows the secrets of my life, took me aside, and told me that Walter de Montreal had been seized by the Senator—that he was adjudged to die, and that one of the Augustine brotherhood had been sent for to attend his last hours—is it so?"

"Thou wert told aright," said Angelo, wonderingly. "The man at whose name thou wert wont to shudder—against whom thou hast so often warned me—will die at sun-rise."

"So soon!—so soon!—Oh, Mother of Mercy!—fly! thou art about the person of the Senator, thou hast high favour with him; fly! down on thy knees—and as thou hopest for God's grace, rise not till thou hast won the Provençal's life."

"She raves," muttered Angelo with white lips.

"I rave *not*,—boy!" screeched the sister, wild-

ly, “know that my daughter was his Leman. He disgraced our house,—a house haughtier than his own. Sinner that I was, I vowed revenge. His boy—they had only one!—was brought up in a robber’s camp;—a life of bloodshed—a death of doom—a futurity of hell—were before him. I plucked the child from such a fate—I bore him away—I told the father he was dead—I placed him in the path to honourable fortunes. May my sin be forgiven me! Angelo Villani, thou art that child!—Walter de Montreal is thy father. But now, trembling on the verge of death, I shudder at the vindictive thought I once nourished. Perhaps,”——

“Sinner and accursed!” interrupted Villani, with a loud shout:—“sinner and accursed thou art indeed! Know that it was *I* betrayed thy daughter’s lover!—by his son’s treason dies the father!”

Not a moment more did he tarry: he waited not to witness the effect his words produced. As one frantic—as one whom a fiend possesses or pursues—he rushed from the Convent—he flew through the desolate streets. The

death-bell came, first indistinct, then loud, upon his ear. Every sound seemed to him like the curse of God; on—on—he passed the more deserted quarter—crowds swept before him—he was mingled with the living stream—delayed, pushed back—thousands on thousands around, before him. Breathless, gasping, he still pressed on—he forced his way—he heard not—he saw not—all was like a dream. Up burst the sun over the distant hills!—the bell ceased! From right to left he pushed aside the crowd—his strength was as a giant's. He neared the fatal spot. A dead hush lay like a heavy air over the multitude. He heard a voice, as he prest along, deep and clear—it was the voice of his father!—it ceased—the audience breathed heavily—they murmured—they swayed to and fro. On, on, went Angelo Vilani. The guards of the Senator stopped his way;—he dashed aside their pikes—he eluded their grasp—he pierced the armed barrier—he stood on the Place of the Capitol. “Hold, hold!” he would have cried—but his tongue clove to his lips. He beheld the gleaming axe—

he saw the bended neck. Ere another breath passed his lips, a ghastly and trunkless face was raised on high—Walter de Montreal was no more !

Villani saw—swooned not—shrunk not—breathed not !—but he turned his eyes from that lifted head, dropping gore, to the balcony, in which, according to custom, sate, in solemn pomp, the Senator of Rome——and the face of that young man was as the face of a demon !

“ Ha !” said he, muttering to himself, and recalling the words of Rienzi seven years before—“ *Blessed art thou, who hast no blood of kindred to avenge !*”

CHAP. VI.

THE SUSPENSE.

WALTER DE MONTREAL was buried in the church of St. Maria dell' Araceli. But the "evil that he did lived after him!" Although the vulgar had, until his apprehension, murmured against Rienzi for allowing so notorious a freebooter to be at large, he was scarcely dead, ere they compassionated the object of their terror. With that singular species of piety which Montreal had always cultivated, as if a decorous and natural part of the character of a warrior, no sooner was his sentence fixed, than he had surrendered himself to the devout preparation for

death. With the Augustine Friar he consumed the brief remainder of the night in prayer and confession—comforted his brothers—and passed to the scaffold with the step of a hero, and the self-acquittal of a martyr. In the wonderful delusions of the human heart, far from feeling remorse at a life of professional rapine and slaughter, almost the last words of the brave warrior were in proud commendation of his own deeds. “Be valiant like me,” he said to his brothers, “and remember, that ye are now the heirs to the Humbler of Apulia, Tuscany, and La Marca.”^(a)

This confidence in himself continued at the scaffold. “I die,” he said, addressing the Romans—“I die, contented, since my bones shall rest in the Holy City of St. Peter and St. Paul, and the Soldier of Christ shall have the burial place of the Apostles. But I die unjustly. My wealth is my crime—the poverty of your state my accuser. Senator of Rome, thou mayst envy my last hour—men like Walter de Montreal perish not unavenged.” So say-

ing, he turned to the East, murmured a brief prayer, knelt down deliberately, and said as to himself, "Rome guard my ashes!—Earth my memory—Fate my revenge;—and, now, Heaven receive my soul!—Strike!" At the first blow, the head was severed from the body.

His treason but imperfectly known, the fear of him forgotten, all that remained of the recollection of Walter de Montreal ^(b) in Rome, was admiration for his heroism, and compassion for his end. The fate of Pandulfo di Guido, which followed some days afterwards, excited a yet deeper, though more quiet sentiment against the Senator. "He was once Rienzi's friend!" said one man; "He was an honest, upright citizen!" muttered another; "He was an advocate of the people!" growled Cecco del Vecchio. It had not been without extreme reluctance that Rienzi had signed the death-warrant of Pandulfo. With the bitterness of betrayed trust, the recollection of ancient affection wrestled strong. But Rienzi had wound himself up to a resolve, to be inflexibly just, and to regard every peril to Rome as became a Ro-

man. In vain he sought excuses for Pandulfo—in vain he endeavoured to convince himself that his life might be spared without injury to the State; every investigation more convinced him of the extent of the prisoner's treason and the strength of his party—the very interest he excited in Rome was proof of the influence of his conspiracy. Rienzi remembered that he had never confided, but he had been betrayed—he had never forgiven, but to sharpen enmity. He was amidst a ferocious people, uncertain friends, wily enemies; and misplaced mercy would be but a premium to conspiracy. Yet when Pandulfo died, the Senator burst into an agony of tears. “Can I never again have the luxury to forgive?” said he. The coarse spectators of that passion deemed it, some imbecility, some hypocrisy. But the execution produced the momentary effect intended. All sedition ceased, terror crept throughout the city, order and peace rose to the surface, but beneath, in the strong expression of a cotemporaneous writer, “Lo Mormorito quetamente suonava.”

On examining dispassionately the conduct of Rienzi at this awful period of his life, it is scarcely possible to condemn it of a single error in point of policy. Cured of his faults, he exhibited no unnecessary ostentation—he indulged in no exhibitions of intoxicated pride—that gorgeous imagination rather than vanity, which had led the Tribune into spectacle and pomp, was now lulled to rest, by the sober memory of grave vicissitudes, and the stern calmness of a maturer intellect. Frugal, provident, watchful, self-collected, “never was seen,” observes no partial witness, “so extraordinary a man. In him was concentrated every thought for every want of Rome. Indefatigably occupied, he inspected, ordained, regulated all things; in the city, in the army, for peace, or for war. But he was feebly supported, and those he employed seemed, beside the energy of their chief, lukewarm and lethargic.” Still his arms prospered. Place after place, fortress after fortress, yielded to the Lieutenant of the Senator: and the cession of Palestrina itself was hourly expected. His art and address were always strikingly exhi-

bited in difficult situations, and the reader cannot fail to have noticed how conspicuously they were displayed in delivering himself of the iron tutelage of his foreign mercenaries. Montreal executed, his brothers imprisoned, (though their lives were spared,) a fear that induced respect, was stricken into the breasts of those bandit soldiers. Removed from Rome, and under Annibaldi, engaged against the Barons, constant action and constant success, withheld those necessary fiends from falling on their Master ; while Rienzi, willing to yield to the natural antipathy of the Romans, thus kept the Northmen from all contact with the city ; and, as he boasted, was the only chief in Italy, who reigned in his palace guarded only by his citizens.

Despite his perilous situation—despite his suspicions, and his fears, no wanton cruelty stained his stern justice—Montreal and Pandulfo di Guido were the only state victims he demanded. If according to the dark Machiavelism of Italian wisdom, the death of those enemies was impolitic ; it was not in the act, but the doing of it. A prince

of Bologna or of Milan, would have avoided the sympathy excited by the scaffold, and the drug or the dagger would have been the safer substitute for the axe. But with all his faults real and imputed, no single act of that foul and murderous policy, which made the science of the more fortunate princes of Italy, ever advanced the ambition or promoted the security of the Last of the Roman Tribunes. Whatever his errors, he lived and died as became a man, who dreamt the vain but glorious dream, that in a corrupt and dastard populace, he could revive the genius of the old Republic.

Of all who attended on the Senator, the most assiduous and the most honoured was still Angelo Villani. Promoted to a high civil station, Rienzi felt it as a return of youth, to find one person entitled to his gratitude;—he loved and confided in the youth as a son. Villani was never absent from his side, except in intercourse with the various popular leaders in the various quarters of the city; and in this intercourse his zeal was indefatigable—it seemed even to prey upon his health; and Rienzi chid him fondly, when-

ever starting from his own reveries, he beheld the abstracted eye, and the livid paleness which had succeeded the sparkle and bloom of youth.

Such chiding the young man answered only by the same unvarying words.

“ Senator, I have a great trust to fulfil ;”—and at these words he smiled.

One day Villani, while with the Senator, said rather abruptly, “ Do you remember, my Lord, that before Viterbo, I acquitted myself so in arms, that even the Cardinal d’Albornoz was pleased to notice me ?”

“ I remember your valour well, Angelo ; but why the question ?”

“ My Lord, Bellini the Captain of the Guard of the Capitol is dangerously ill.”

“ I know it.”

“ Who can my Lord trust at the post ?”

“ Why, the Lieutenant.”

“ What !—a soldier that has served under the Orsini !”

“ True. Well ! there is Tommaso Filangieri.”

“An excellent man; but is he not kin by blood to Pandulfo di Guido?”

“Ay—is he so? It must be thought of. Hast *thou* any friend to name?” said the Senator smiling. “Methinks thy cavils point that way.”

“My Lord,” replied Villani, colouring; “I am too young, perhaps; but the post is one that demands fidelity more than it does years: shall I own it?—my tastes are rather to serve thee with my sword than with my pen.”

“Wilt thou, indeed, accept the office? It is of less dignity and emolument than the one you hold; and you are full young to lead these stubborn spirits.”

“Senator, I led taller men than they are to the assault at Viterbo. But, be it as seems best to your superior wisdom. Whatever you do, I pray you to be cautious. If you select a traitor to the command of the Capitol Guard!—I tremble at the thought!”

“By my faith, thou dost turn pale at it, dear boy; thy affection is a sweet drop in a bitter draught. Who can I choose better than thee?—

thou shalt have the post, at least during Bel-
lini's illness. I will attend to it to-day. The
business too will less fatigue thy young mind
than that which now employs thee. Thou art
over-laboured in our cause !”

“ Senator ; I can but repeat my usual answer
--I have a great trust to fulfil !”

CHAP. VII.

THE TAX.

THESE formidable conspiracies quelled, the Barons nearly subdued, and three parts of the Papal territory re-united to Rome, Rienzi now deemed he might safely execute one of his favourite projects for the preservation of the liberties of his native city; and this was to raise and organize in each quarter of Rome, a Roman Legion. Armed in the defence of their own institutions, he thus trusted to establish amongst her own citizens the only soldiery requisite for Rome.

But so base were the tools with which this great man was condemned to work out his noble schemes, that none could be found to

serve their own country, without a pay equal to that demanded by foreign hirelings. With the insolence so peculiar to a race that has once been great, each Roman said, "Am I not better than a German?—pay me then accordingly."

The Senator smothered his disgust—he had learnt at last to know that the age of the Catos was no more. From a daring enthusiast, experience had converted him into a practical statesman. The Legions were necessary to Rome—they were formed—gallant their appearance and faultless their caparisons. How were they to be paid? There was but one means to maintain Rome—Rome must be taxed. A *gabelle* was put upon wine and salt.

The Proclamation ran thus:—

"Romans; raised to the rank of your Senator, my whole thought has been for your liberties and welfare; already treason defeated in the City, our banners triumphant without, attest the favour with which the Deity regards men who seek to unite liberty with law. Let us set an example to Italy and the world! Let us prove that the Roman sword can guard the

Roman Forum ! In each Rione of the City is provided a Legion of the citizens, collected from the traders and artisans of the town ; they allege that they cannot leave their occupations without remuneration. Your Senator calls upon you willingly to assist in your own defence. He has given you liberty ; he has restored to you peace : your oppressors are scattered over the earth. He asks you now to preserve the treasures you have gained. To be free you must sacrifice something ; for freedom, what sacrifice too great ? Confident of your support, I at length, for the first time, exert the right entrusted to me by office—and for Rome's salvation I tax the Romans !”

Then followed the announcement of the gabelle.

The Proclamation was placed upon the public thoroughfares. Round one of the placards a crowd was assembled. Their gestures were vehement and unguarded—their eyes sparkled—they conversed low, but eagerly.

“ He dares to tax us, then ! Why the Barons or the Pope could only do that !”

“ Shame ! shame ! ” cried a gaunt female ;
“ we, who were his friends ! How are our little
ones to get bread ? ”

“ He should have seized the Pope’s money ! ”
quoth an honest wine-vender.

“ Ah ! Pandulfo di Guido would have main-
tained an army at his own cost. He was a rich
man. What insolence in the innkeeper’s son
to be a Senator ! ”

“ We are not Romans if we suffer this ! ” said
a deserter from Palestrina.

“ Fellow-citizens ! ” exclaimed gruffly, a tall
man, who had hitherto been making a clerk
read to him the particulars of the tax imposed,
and whose heavy brain at length understood
that wine was to be made dearer—“ Fellow-
citizens ; we must have a new revolution ! This
is indeed gratitude ! What have we benefited
by restoring this man ? Are we always to be
ground to the dust ? To pay—pay—pay ! Is
that all we are fit for ? ”

“ Hark ! to Cecco del Vecchio ! ”

“ No, no ; not now, ” growled the smith.
“ To night the artificers have a special meet-
ing. We’ll see—we’ll see ! ”

A young man muffled in a cloak, who had not been before observed, touched the smith.

“Whoever storms the Capitol the day after to-morrow at the dawn,” he whispered, “shall find the guards absent !”

He was gone before the smith could look round.

The same night Rienzi, retiring to rest, said to Angelo Villani—“A bold but necessary measure this of mine ! How do the people take it ?”

“They murmur a little ; but seem to recognise the necessity. Cecco del Vecchio *was* the loudest grumbler,—but is now the loudest approver.”

“The man is rough ; he once deserted me ;—but then that fatal excommunication ! He and the Romans learned a bitter lesson in that desertion, and experience has, I trust, taught them to be honest. Well, if this tax be raised quietly,

in two years Rome will be the master state of Italy;—her army manned—her Republic formed; and then—then—”

“ Then what, Senator ? ”

“ Why then, my Angelo, Cola di Rienzi may die in peace ! There is a want which a profound experience of power and pomp brings at last to us—a want gnawing as that of hunger, wearying as that of sleep !—my Angelo, it is the want to die ! ”

“ My Lord, I would give this right-hand,” cried Villani earnestly, “ to hear you say you were attached to life ! ”

“ You are a good youth, Angelo ! ” said Rienzi, as he passed to Nina’s chamber ; and in her smile and wistful tenderness, forgot for a while—that he was a great man !

CHAP. VIII.

THE THRESHOLD OF THE EVENT.

THE next morning the Senator of Rome held High Court in the Capitol. From Florence, from Padua, from Pisa, even from Milan, (the dominion of the Visconti,) from Genoa, from Naples,—came Ambassadors to welcome his return, or to thank him for having freed Italy from the freebooter de Montreal. Venice alone, who held in her pay the Grand Company, stood aloof. Never had Rienzi seemed more prosperous and more powerful, and never had he exhibited a more easy and cheerful majesty of demeanour.

Scarce was the audience over, when a messenger arrived from Palestrina. The town had

surrendered, the Colonna had departed, and the standard of the Senator waved from the walls of the last hold of the rebellious Barons. Rome might now at length consider herself free, and not a foe seemed left to menace the repose of Rienzi.

The Court dissolved. The Senator, elated and joyous, repaired towards his private apartments, previous to the banquet given to the Ambassadors. Villani met him with his wonted sombre aspect.

“No sadness to-day, my Angelo,” said the Senator gaily; “Palestrina is ours!”

“I am glad to hear such news, and to see my Lord of so fair a mien,” answered Angelo. “Does he not now desire life?”

“Till Roman virtue revives, perhaps—yes!—but thus are we fools of Fortune—to-day glad—to-morrow dejected!”

“To-morrow,” repeated Villani, mechanically: “Ay,—to-morrow perhaps dejected!”

“Thou playest with my words, boy,” said Rienzi, half angrily, as he turned away.

But Villani heeded not the displeasure of his Lord.

The banquet was thronged and brilliant ; and Rienzi that day, without an effort, played the courteous host.

Milanese, Paduan, Pisan, Neapolitan, vied with each other in attracting the smiles of the potent Senator. Prodigal were their compliments—humble their promises of support. No monarch in Italy seemed more securely throned.

The banquet was over (as usual on state occasions) at an early hour ; and Rienzi, somewhat heated with wine, strolled forth alone from the Capitol. Bending his solitary steps towards the Palatine, he saw the pale and veil-like mists that succeed the sunset, gather over the wild grass that waves above the Palace of the Cæsars. On a mound of ruins (column and arch overthrown) he stood, with folded arms, musing and intent. In the distance lay the melancholy tombs of the Campagna, and the circling hills, crested with the purple hues soon to melt beneath the starlight. Not a breeze stirred the dark cypress and unwavering pine. There was something awful in the stillness of the skies, hushing the desolate grandeur of the

earth below. It was like the calm before a storm. Many and mingled were the thoughts that swept over Rienzi's breast: memory was busy at his heart. How often, in his youth, had he trodden the same spot!—what visions had he nursed, what hopes conceived! In the turbulence of his later life Memory had long slept; but at that hour she re-asserted her shadowy reign with a despotism that seemed prophetic. He was wandering—a boy, with his young brother, hand in hand, by the riverside at eve: anon he saw a pale face and gory side, and once more uttered his imprecations of revenge! His first successes,—his virgin triumphs,—his secret love,—his fame,—his power, his reverses,—the hermitage of Maiella,—the dungeon of Avignon,—the triumphal return to Rome,—all swept across his breast with a distinctness as if he were living those scenes again!—and *now*!—he shrunk from the *present*, and descended the hill. The moon, already risen, shed her light over the Forum, as he passed through its mingled ruins. By the Temple of Jupiter two figures suddenly emerged;

the moonlight fell upon their faces, and Rienzi recognised Cecco del Vecchio and Angelo Vilani. They saw him not; but, eagerly conversing, disappeared by the Arch of Trajan.

“ Ever active in my service !” thought the Senator; “ methinks this morning I spoke to him harshly—it was churlish in me !”

He re-entered the Place of the Capitol—he stood by the staircase of the Lion; there was a red stain upon the pavement, unobliterated since Montreal’s execution, and the Senator drew himself aside with an inward shudder. Was it the ghastly and spectral light of the moon, or did the face of that old Egyptian sculpture wear an aspect that was as of life ! The stony eyeballs seemed bent upon him with a malignant scowl; and as he passed on, and looked behind, they appeared almost preternaturally to follow his steps. A chill, he knew not why, sunk into his heart. He hastened to regain his palace. The sentinels made way for him.

“ Senator,” said one of them, doubtingly,

“Messere Angelo Villani is our new captain—we are to obey his orders?”

“Assuredly,” returned the Senator, passing on. The man lingered uneasily, as if he would have spoken, but Rienzi observed it not. Seeking his chamber, he found Nina and Irene waiting for him. His heart yearned to his wife. Care and toil had of late driven her from his thoughts, and he felt it remorsefully, as he gazed upon her noble face, softened by the solicitude of untiring and anxious love.

“Sweetest,” said he, winding his arms around her tenderly; “thy lips never chide me, but thine eyes sometimes do! We have been apart too long. Brighter days dawn upon us, when I shall have leisure to thank thee for all thy care. And you, my fair sister, you smile on me!—ah, you have heard that your lover, ere this, is released by the cession of Palestrina, and to-morrow’s sun will see him at your feet. Despite all the cares of the day, I remembered thee, my Irene, and sent a messenger to bring back the blush to that pale cheek. Come, come, we shall

be happy again !” And with that domestic fondness common to him, when harsher thoughts permitted, he sate himself beside the two dearest to his hearth and heart.

“ So happy—if we could have many hours like this !” murmured Nina, sinking on his breast. “ Yet sometimes I wish !”—

“ And I too,” interrupted Rienzi; “ for I read thy woman’s thought—*I* too sometimes wish that fate had placed us in the lowlier valleys of life ! But it may come yet ! Irene wedded to Adrian—Rome married to Liberty—and then, Nina, methinks you and I would find some quiet hermitage, and talk over old gauds and triumphs, as of a summer’s dream. Beautiful, kiss me. Couldst thou resign these pomps ?”

“ For a desert with *thee*, Cola !”

“ Let me reflect,” resumed Rienzi; “ is not to-day the seventh of October ? Yes ! on the seventh, be it noted, my foes yielded to my power ! Seven ! my fated number, whether ominous of good or evil ! Seven months did I reign as Tribune—seven (°) years was I absent as

an exile ; to-morrow, that sees me without an enemy, completes my seventh week of return !”

“ And seven was the number of the crowns—the Roman Convents and the Roman Council awarded thee, after the ceremony which gave thee the knighthood of the *Santo Spirito* !” (^d) said Nina, adding, with woman’s tender wit, the brightest association of all !

“ Follies seem these thoughts to others, and to philosophy, in truth, they are so,” said Rienzi ; “ but all my life long, omen and type and shadow have linked themselves to action and event : And the atmosphere of other men hath not been mine. Life itself a riddle, why should riddles amaze us ? *The Future* !—what mystery in the very word ! Had we lived all *through* the Past since Time was, our profoundest experience of a thousand ages could not give us a guess of the events that wait the very moment we are about to enter ! Thus deserted by Reason, what wonder that we recur to the Imagination, on which, by dream and symbol, God sometimes paints the likeness of things to come ? Who can endure to leave the Future all

unguest, and sit tamely down to groan under the fardel of the Present? No, no! that which the foolish-wise call Fanaticism, belongs to the same part of us as Hope. Each but carries us onward—from a barren strand to a glorious, if unbounded sea. Each is the yearning for the GREAT BEYOND, which attests our immortality. Each has its visions and chimeras—some false, but *some* true! Verily, a man who becomes great is often but made so by a kind of sorcery in his own soul—a Pythia which prophesies that he *shall* be great—and so renders the life one effort to fulfil the warning! Is this folly?—it were so, if all things stopped at the grave! But perhaps the very sharpening, and exercising, and elevating the faculties here—though but for a bootless end *on* earth—may be designed to fit the soul, thus quickened and ennobled, to some high destiny *beyond* the earth! Who can tell? not I!—Let us pray!”

While the Senator was thus employed, Rome in her various quarters presented less holy and quiet scenes.

In the fortress of the Orsini lights flitted to

and fro, through the gratings of the great court. Angelo Villani might be seen stealing from the postern-gate. Another hour, and the Moon was high in heaven ; toward the ruins of the Colosseum, men, whose dress bespoke them of the lowest rank, were seen creeping from lanes and alleys, two by two ; from these ruins glided again the form of the son of Montreal. Later yet—the Moon is sinking—a grey light breaking in the East—and the gates of Rome, by St. John of Lateran, are open ! Villani is conversing with the sentries ! The Moon has set—the mountains are dim with a mournful and chilling haze—Villani is before the palace of the Capitol—the *only* soldier there ! Where are the Roman legions that were to guard alike the freedom and the deliverer of Rome?—

CHAPTER THE LAST.

THE CLOSE OF THE CHACE.

IT was the morning of the 8th of October, 1354. Rienzi, who rose betimes, stirred restlessly in his bed. "It is yet early," he said to Nina, whose soft arm was round his neck, "none of my people seem to be astir. Howbeit, *my* day begins before *theirs*."

"Rest yet, my Cola; you want sleep."

"No; I feel feverish, and this old pain in the side torments me. I have letters to write."

"Let me be your secretary, dearest," said Nina.

Rienzi smiled affectionately as he rose: he repaired to his closet adjoining his sleeping apartment, and used the bath, as was his

wont. Then dressing himself, he returned to Nina, who, already loosely robed, sate by the writing table, ready for her office of love.

“How still are all things!” said Rienzi. “What a cool and delicious prelude, in these early hours, to the toilsome day.”

Leaning over his wife, he then dictated different letters, interrupting the task at times by such observations as crossed his mind.

“So, now to Annibaldi! By the way, young Adrian should join us to-day; how I rejoice for Irene’s sake!”

“Dear sister—yes! she loves, if any, Cola, can love, as we do.”

“Well, but to your task, my fair scribe. Ha! what noise is that? I hear an armed step—the stairs creak—some one shouts my name.”

Rienzi flew to his sword; the door was thrown rudely open, and a figure in complete armour stood in the chamber.

“How! what means this?” said Rienzi, standing before Nina with his drawn sword.

The intruder lifted his visor—it was Adrian Colonna.

“Fly, Rienzi!—hasten, Signora! Thank Heaven, I can save ye yet! Myself and train released by the capture of Palestrina, the pain of my wound detained me last night at Tivoli. The town was filled with armed men—not *thine*, Senator. I heard rumours that alarmed me. I resolved to proceed onward—I reached Rome, the gates of the city were wide open!”

“How!”

“Your guard gone. Presently I came upon a band of the retainers of the Savelli. My insignia, as a Colonna, misled them. I learnt that this very hour some of your enemies are within the city, the rest are on their march—the people themselves arm against you. In the obscurer streets I passed through, the mob were already forming. They took me for thy foe, and shouted. I came hither—thy sentries have vanished. The private door below is unbarred and open. Not a soul seems left in thy palace. Haste—fly—save thyself!—Where is Irene?”

“The Capitol deserted!—impossible!” cried Rienzi. He strode across the chambers to the ante-room, where his night-guard waited—it was

empty ! He passed hastily to Villani's room—it was untenanted ! He would have passed farther, but the doors were secured without. It was evident that all egress had been cut off, save by the private door below,—and that had been left open to admit his murtherers !

He returned to his room—Nina had already gone to rouse and prepare Irene, whose chamber was on the other side, within one of their own.

“Quick, Senator !” said Adrian. “Methinks there is yet time. We must make across to the Tiber. I have stationed my faithful squires and Northmen there. A boat waits us.”

“Hark !” interrupted Rienzi, whose senses had of late been preternaturally quickened. “I hear a distant shout—a familiar shout, ‘Viva ’l Popolo !’ Why, so say I ! These must be friends.”

“Deceive not thyself; thou hast scarce a friend at Rome.”

“Hist !” said Rienzi in a whisper; “save Nina—save Irene. I cannot accompany thee.”

“Art thou mad ?”

“No! but fearless. Besides, did I accompany, I might but destroy, you all. Were I found with you, you would be massacred with me. Without me, ye are safe. Yes, even the Senator’s wife and sister have provoked no revenge. Save them, noble Colonna. Cola di Rienzi puts his trust in God alone !”

By this time Nina had returned—Irene with her. Afar was heard the tramp—steady—slow—gathering—of the fatal multitude.

“Now, Cola,” said Nina, with a bold and cheerful air, and she took her husband’s arm, while Adrian had already found his charge in Irene.

“Yes, *now*, Nina!” said Rienzi; “at length we part! If this is my last hour—in my last hour I pray God to bless and shield thee; for verily, thou hast been my exceeding solace—provident as a parent, tender as a child, the smile of my hearth, the—the--”

Rienzi was almost unmanned. Emotions, deep, conflicting, unspeakably fond and grateful, literally choked his speech.

“What !” cried Nina, clinging to his breast,

and parting her hair from her eyes as she sought his averted face. "Part!—never! This is my place—all Rome shall not tear me from it."

Adrian in despair, seized her hand, and attempted to drag her thence.

"Touch me not, sir!" said Nina, waving her arm with angry majesty, while her eyes sparkled as a lioness, whom the huntsmen would sever from her young. "I am the wife of Cola di Rienzi, the Great Senator of Rome, and by his side will I live and die!"

"Take her hence; quick!—quick! I hear the crowd advancing."

Irene tore herself from Adrian, and fell at the feet of Rienzi—she clasped his knees.

"Come, my brother, come! Why lose these precious moments? Rome forbids you to cast away a life in which her very self is bound up."

"Right, Irene—Rome is bound up with me, and we will rise or fall together!—no more!"

"You destroy us all!" said Adrian, with generous and impatient warmth. "A few minutes more, and we are lost. Rash man! it is not to fall by an infuriate mob that you have been preserved from so many dangers."

“I believe it,” said the Senator, as his tall form seemed to dilate as with the greatness of his own soul. “I shall triumph yet. Never shall mine enemies—never shall posterity say that a *second* time Rienzi abandoned Rome! Hark! ‘Viva ’l Popolo!’ still the cry of ‘THE PEOPLE.’ That cry scares none but tyrants! I shall triumph and survive.”

“And I with thee!” said Nina, firmly. Rienzi paused a moment, gazed on his wife, passionately clasped her to his heart, kissed her again and again, and then said, “Nina, I command thee,—Go!”

“Never.”

He paused. Irene’s face, drowned in tears, met his eyes.

“We will all perish with you,” said his sister; “you only, Adrian, *you* leave us.”

“Be it so,” said the Knight, sadly; “we will *all* remain,” and he desisted at once from further effort.

There was a dead but short pause, broken but by a convulsive sob from Irene. The tramp of the raging thousands sounded fearfully distinct.

Rienzi seemed lost in thought—then lifting his head, he said calmly, “Ye have triumphed—I join ye—I but collect these papers, and follow you. Quick, Adrian—save them !” and he pointed meaningly to Nina.

Waiting no other hint, the young Colonna seized Nina in his strong grasp—with his left hand he supported Irene, who with terror and excitement was almost insensible. Rienzi relieved him of the lighter load—he took his sister in his arms, and descended the winding stairs—Nina remained passive—she heard her husband’s step behind, it was enough for her—she but turned once to thank him with her eyes. A tall Northman clad in armour stood at the open door. Rienzi placed Irene, now perfectly lifeless, in the soldier’s arms, and kissed her pale cheek in silence.

“Quick, my Lord,” said the Northman, “on all sides they come !” So saying he bounded down the descent with his burthen. Adrian followed with Nina ; the Senator paused one moment, turned back, and was in his room ere Adrian perceived him vanish.

Hastily he drew the coverlid from his bed,

fastened it to the casement bars, and by its aid dropped (at a distance of several feet) into the balcony below. "I will not die like a rat," said he, "in the trap they have set for me ! The whole crowd shall at least see and hear me !"

This was the work of a moment.

Meanwhile, Nina had scarcely proceeded six paces, before she discovered that she was alone with Adrian.

"Ha ! Cola !" she cried, "where is he ? he has gone !"

"Take heart, Lady, he has returned but for some secret papers he has forgotten. He will follow us anon."

"Let us wait, then."

"Lady," said Adrian, grinding his teeth, "hear you not the crowd—on, on !" and he flew with a swifter step. Nina struggled from his grasp—Love gave her the strength of despair. With a wild laugh she broke from him. She flew back—the door was closed—but unbarred—her trembling hands lingered a moment round the spring. She opened it, drew the heavy bolt across the pannels, and frustrated all attempt

from Adrian to regain her. She was on the stairs,—she was in the room. Rienzi was gone! She fled, shrieking his name, through the State Chambers—all was desolate. She found the doors opening on the various passages that admitted to the rooms below barred without. Breathless and gasping, she returned to the chamber. She hurried to the casement—she perceived the method by which he had descended below—her brave heart told her of his brave design;—she saw they were separated,—“But the same roof holds us,” she cried joyously, “and our fate shall be the same!” With that thought she sank in mute patience on the floor.

Forming the generous resolve not to abandon the faithful and devoted pair without another effort, Adrian had followed Nina, but too late—the door was closed against his efforts. The crowd marched on—he heard their cry change on a sudden—it was no longer “LIVE THE PEOPLE!” but “DEATH TO THE TRAITOR!” His attendant had already disappeared and waking now only to the danger of Irene, the Colonna in bitter grief turned away, lightly sped down the

descent, and hastened to the river side, where the boat and his band awaited him.

The balcony on which Rienzi had alighted was that from which he had been accustomed to address the people—it communicated with a vast hall used on solemn occasions for State festivals—and on either side were square projecting towers, whose grated casements looked into the balcony. One of these towers was devoted to the armoury, the other contained the prison of Brettone, the brother of Montreal. Beyond the latter tower was the general prison of the Capitol. For then the prison and the palace were in awful neighbourhood !

The windows of the Hall were yet open—and Rienzi passed into it from the balcony—the witness of the yesterday's banquet was still there—the wine yet undried, crimsoned the floor, and goblets of gold and silver shone from the recesses. He proceeded at once to the armoury, and selected from the various suits, that which he himself had worn when nearly eight years ago he had chased the Barons from the gates of Rome. He arrayed himself in the mail, leaving only

his head uncovered; and then taking, in his right hand, from the wall, the great Gonfalon of Rome, returned once more to the hall. Not a man encountered him. In that vast building, save the prisoners, and one faithful heart whose presence he knew not of—the Senator was alone.

On they came, no longer in measured order, as stream after stream—from lane, from alley, from palace and from hovel—the raging sea received new additions. On they came—their passions excited by their numbers—women and men, children and malignant age—in all the awful array of aroused, released, unresisted physical strength and brutal wrath: “Death to the traitor—death to the tyrant—death to him who has taxed the people!”—“Mora ’l traditore che ha fatta la gabella!—Mora!” Such was the cry of the people—such the crime of the Senator! They broke over the low palisades of the Capitol—they filled with one sudden rush the vast space;—a moment before so desolate,—now swarming with human beings athirst for blood!

Suddenly came a dead silence, and on the balcony above stood Rienzi—his face was bared and the morning sun shone over that lordly brow, and the hair grown grey before its time, in the service of that maddening multitude. Pale and erect he stood—neither fear, nor anger, nor menace—but deep grief and high resolve upon his features ! A momentary shame—a momentary awe seized the crowd.

He pointed to the Gonfalon, wrought with the Republican motto and arms of Rome, and thus he began ;—

“ I too am a Roman and a Citizen ; hear me ! ”

“ Hear him not ; hear him not ! his false tongue can charm away our senses ! ” cried a voice louder than his own ; and Rienzi recognised Cecco del Vecchio.

“ Hear him not ; down with the tyrant ! ” cried a more shrill and youthful tone ; and by the side of the artisan stood Angelo Villani.

“ Hear him not ; death to the death giver ! ” cried a voice close at hand, and from the grating of the neighbouring prison glared near upon

him, as the eye of a tiger, the vengeful gaze of the brother of Montreal.

Then from earth to Heaven rose the roar—
“Down with the tyrant—down with him who
taxed the people !”

A shower of stones rattled on the mail of the Senator,—still he stirred not. No changing muscle betokened fear. His persuasion of his own wonderful powers of eloquence, if he could but be heard, inspired him yet with hope; he stood collected in his own indignant, but determined, thoughts;—but the knowledge of that very eloquence was now his deadliest foe. The leaders of the multitude trembled lest he *should* be heard; “*and, doubtless,*” says the cotemporary biographer, “*had he but spoken, he would have changed them all, and the work been marred !*”

The soldiers of the Barons had already mixed themselves with the throng—more deadly weapons than stones aided the wrath of the multitude—darts and arrows darkened the air; and now a voice was heard shrieking—“Way for the torches !” Red in the sunlight they

tossed and waved, and danced to and fro, above the heads of the crowd, as if the fiends were let loose amongst the mob ! And what place in hell *hath* fiends like those a mad mob can furnish ? Straw, and wood, and litter were piled hastily round the great doors of the Capitol, and the smoke curled suddenly up, beating back the rush of the assailants.

Rienzi was no longer visible, an arrow had pierced his hand—the right hand that supported the flag of Rome—the right hand that had given a constitution to the Republic. He retired from the storm into the desolate hall. He sat down;—and tears, springing from no weak and woman source, but tears from the loftiest fountain of emotion—tears that befit a warrior when his own troops desert him—a patriot when his countrymen rush to their own doom—a father when his children rebel against his love,—tears such as these forced themselves from his eyes and relieved,—but *they changed*, his heart !

“ Enough, enough,” he said, presently rising and dashing the drops scornfully away ; “ I have risked, dared, toiled enough for this dastard and

degenerate race. I will yet baffle their malice—I renounce the thought of which they are so little worthy! Let Rome perish!—I feel, at last, that I am nobler than my country!—she deserves not so high a sacrifice!”

With that feeling, Death lost all the nobleness of aspect it had before presented to him; and he resolved, in very scorn of his ungrateful foes, in very defeat of their inhuman wrath, to make one effort for his life! He divested himself of his glittering arms; his address, his dexterity, his craft, returned to him. His active mind ran over the chances of disguise—of escape;—he left the hall—passed through the humbler rooms, devoted to the servitors and menials—found in one of them a coarse working garb—indued himself with it—placed upon his head some of the draperies and furniture of the palace, as if escaping with them; and said, with his old “*fantastico riso*”—“When all other friends desert me, I may well forsake myself!” With that he awaited his occasion.

Meanwhile the flames burnt fierce and fast; the outer door below was already consumed;

from the apartment he had deserted the fire burst out in volleys of smoke—the wood crackled—the lead melted—with a crash fell the severed gates—the dreadful ingress was opened to all the multitude—the proud Capitol of the Cæsars was already tottering to its fall!—Now was the time!—he passed the flaming door—the smouldering threshold;—he passed the outer gate unscathed—he was in the middle of the crowd. “Plenty of pillage within,” he said to the by-standers, in the Roman patois, his face concealed by his load—“Suso suso a gliu traditore!” The mob rushed past him—he went on—he gained the last stair descending into the open streets—he was at the last gate—liberty and life were before him.

A soldier (one of his own) seized him. “Pass not—where goest thou?”

“Beware, lest the Senator escape disguised!” cried a voice behind—it was Villani’s. The concealing load was torn from his head—Rienzi stood revealed!

“I *am* the Senator!” he said in a loud voice.

“Who dare touch the Representative of the People?”

The multitude were round him in an instant. Not led, but rather hurried and whirled along—the Senator was borne to the Place of the Lion. With the intense glare of the bursting flames, the grey image reflected a lurid light, and glowed—(that grim and solemn monument!)—as if itself of fire!

There arrived, the crowd gave way, terrified by the greatness of their victim. Silent he stood, and turned his face around; nor could the squalor of his garb, nor the terror of the hour, nor the proud grief of detection, abate the majesty of his mien, or reassure the courage of the thousands who gathered, gazing, round him. The whole Capitol wrapped in fire, lighted with ghastly pomp the immense multitude. Down the long vista of the streets extended the fiery light and the serried throng, till the crowd closed with the gleaming standards of the Colonna—the Orsini—the Savelli! Her true tyrants were marching into Rome! As the

sound of their approaching horns and trumpets broke upon the burning air, the mob seemed to regain their courage. Rienzi prepared to speak; his first word was as the signal of his own death.

“Die, tyrant !” cried Cecco del Vecchio: and he plunged his dagger in the Senator’s breast.

“Die, executioner of Montreal !” muttered Villani, “thus the trust is fulfilled !” and his was the second stroke. Then as he drew back, and saw the artisan in all the drunken fury of his brute passion, tossing up his cap, shouting aloud, and spurning the fallen lion; the young man gazed upon him with a look of withering and bitter scorn, and said, while he sheathed his blade, and slowly turned to quit the crowd,

“Fool, miserable fool ! *thou and these at least had no blood of kindred to avenge !*”

They heeded not his words, they saw him not depart; for, as Rienzi, without a word, without a groan, fell to the earth,—as the roaring waves of the multitude closed over him,—a voice shrill, sharp, and wild, was heard above all the clamour. At the casement of the Palace, (the casement of

her bridal chamber,) Nina stood !—through the flames, that burst below and around, her face and out-stretched arms alone visible ! Ere yet the sound of that thrilling cry passed from the air, down with a mighty crash thundered that whole wing of the Capitol,—a blackened and smouldering mass.

At that hour, a solitary boat was sailing swiftly down the Tiber. Rome was at a distance, but the lurid glow of the conflagration cast its reflection upon the placid and glassy stream : fair beyond description was the landscape ; soft beyond all art of Painter and of Poet, the sunlight quivering over the autumnal herbage, and hushing into tender calm the waves of the golden Tiber !

Adrian's eyes were strained towards the towers of the Capitol, distinguished by the flames from the spires and domes around : senseless and clasped to his guardian breast, Irene was happily unconscious of the horrors of the time.

“ They dare not, they dare not,” said the brave Colonna, “ touch a hair of that sacred

head—if Rienzi fall, the liberties of Rome fall for ever !^(e) As those towers that surmount the flames, the pride and monument of Rome, he shall rise above the dangers of the hour. Behold, still unscathed amidst the raging element, the Capitol itself is his emblem !”

Scarce had he spoke, when a vast volume of smoke obscured the fires afar off, a dull crash (deadened by the distance) travelled to his ear, and the next moment, the towers on which he gazed, had vanished from the scene, and one intense and sullen glare seemed to settle over the atmosphere,—making all Rome itself, the funeral pyre of THE LAST OF THE ROMAN TRIBUNES !

NOTES TO BOOK X.

Note (a)—Page 298.

The words of Montreal in the original, are even yet stronger in self-commendation—“Pregovi che vi amiate e siate valorosi al mondo, come fui io, che mi feci fare obbedienza a la Puglia, Toscana, e a la Marca.”—*Vit. di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. cap. xxii.

Note (b)—Page 299.

The military renown and bold exploits of Montreal are acknowledged by all the Italian authorities. One of them declares that since the time of Cæsar Italy had never known so great a Captain. The biographer of Rienzi, forgetting all the offences of the splendid and knightly robber, seems to feel only commiseration for his fate. He informs us, moreover, that at Tivoli one of his servants hearing his death, died himself of grief, the following day. Notable reason have I for conjecturing that this faithful servant was the rude and ferocious Rodolf of Saxony, and fain would I have painted that wild fidelity. But after Montreal's fall, no meaner death could be allowed to delay *that* death which is his revenge!

Note (c)—Page 319.

There was the lapse of one year between the release of Rienzi from Avignon, and his triumphal return to Rome: a year chiefly spent in the campaign of Albornoz.

Note (d)—Page 320.

This superstition had an excuse in strange historical coincidences ; and the number seven was indeed to Rienzi what the 3rd of September was to Cromwell. The ceremony of the seven crowns which he received after his knighthood, and of the nature of which, ridiculous ignorance has been shown by many recent writers, was in fact principally a religious and typical donation, symbolical of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, conferred by the heads of convents—and that part of the ceremony which was political, was republican, not regal.

Note (e), Page 343.

I said (in the preface to this work) that in some respects I differed from Gibbon in his view of the character of Rienzi. I differ from him yet more as to the causes of Rienzi's fall. Whatever the Roman's faults, I repeat, that it was not by his faults he fell. The principal authority from which the history of the Tribune is composed, is a very curious biography, by some unknown contemporary. It was published, (and the errors of the former editions revised,) by Muratori in his great collection, and has lately been reprinted separately, accompanied by notes of much discrimination and scholastic taste, and a comment upon that celebrated poem of Petrarch, "*Spirto Gentil*," which the majority of Italian critics have concurred in considering addressed to Rienzi, and which no man, less dull, and less conceited, than the Abbé de Sade, could possibly consider addressed to any one else.

This biography has been generally lauded for its

rare impartiality. And the author does indeed praise and blame alike with a most singular appearance of stolid candour. The work, in truth, is one of those not uncommon proofs, of which Boswell's *Johnson* is the most striking, that a very valuable book may be written by a very silly man. The biographer of *Rienzi* appears more like the biographer of *Rienzi's* clothes, so minute is he on all details of their colour and quality—so silent is he upon every thing that could throw light upon the motives of their wearer. In fact, granting the writer every desire to be impartial, he is too foolish to be so. It requires some cleverness to judge accurately of a very clever man in very difficult circumstances, and the worthy biographer is utterly incapable of giving us any clue to the actions of *Rienzi*—utterly unable to explain the conduct of the man by the circumstance of the time. The weakness of his vision causes him, therefore, often to squint. We must add to this want of wisdom, a want of truth, which the Herodotus-like simplicity of his style frequently conceals. He describes things which had no witness as precisely and distinctly as those which he himself had seen. For instance, before the death of *Rienzi*, in those awful moments when the Senator was alone, unheard, unseen, he coolly informs us of each motion, and each thought of *Rienzi's*, with as much detail as if *Rienzi* had lived to tell him all about it. And Gibbon, and others, have absolutely adopted these palpable inventions without at all appearing sensible of their own ridiculous credulity. Still, however, to a patient and cautious reader the biography may furnish a much better notion of *Rienzi's* character, than we can glean from the historians who have borrowed

from it piece-meal. Such a reader will discard all the writer's reasonings, will think little of his praise and blame, and regard only the facts he narrates, judging them true or doubtful, according as the writer had the opportunities of being himself the observer. Thus examining, the reader will find evidence sufficient of Rienzi's genius, and Rienzi's failings: carefully distinguishing the period of his power as Tribune, and that of his power as Senator, he will find the Tribune vain, haughty, fond of display—he will not recognise those faults in the Senator. On the other hand, he will notice the difference between youth and maturity;—hope and experience;—he will notice in the Tribune vast ambition, great schemes, enterprising activity—which sober into less gorgeous and more quiet colours in the portrait of the Senator. He will find that in neither instance did Rienzi fall from his own faults—he will find that the vulgar moral of ambition blasted by its own excesses, is not the true moral of the Roman's life; he will find that both in his abdication as Tribune, and his death as Senator, Rienzi fell from the vices of the people. The Tribune was a victim to ignorant cowardice—the Senator a victim to ferocious avarice. It is this which modern historians have failed to represent. Gibbon records rightly, that the Count of Minorbino entered Rome with one hundred and fifty soldiers, and barricaded the quarter of the Colonna—that the bell of the Capitol sounded—that Rienzi addressed the People—that they were silent and inactive—and that Rienzi then abdicated the government. But for this he calls *Rienzi* “pusillanimous” Is not that epithet to be applied to *the people*? Rienzi invoked them to move against the robber—the People refused to obey. Rienzi wished to

fight—the People refused to stir. It was not the cause of Rienzi alone which demanded their exertions—it was the cause of the People—theirs, not his, the shame, if one hundred and fifty foreign soldiers mastered Rome, overthrew their liberties, and restored their tyrants! Whatever Rienzi's sins—whatever his unpopularity—their freedom, their laws, their republic were at stake, and these they surrendered to one hundred and fifty hirelings! This is the fact that damns them! But Rienzi was not unpopular when he addressed and conjured them they found no fault with him. "The sighs and the groans of the People," says Sismondi, "replied to his"—they could weep, but they would not fight. This strange apathy the modern historians have not accounted for, yet the principal cause was obvious—Rienzi was *excommunicated*! In stating the fact, these writers have seemed to think that excommunication in Rome in the fourteenth century produced no effect!—the effect it did produce I have endeavoured in these volumes to convey.

The causes of the second fall and final massacre of Rienzi are equally mistated by modern narrators. It was from no fault of his—no injustice—no cruelty—no extravagance—it was not from the execution of Montreuil—nor that of Pandulfo di Guido—it was from a gabelle on wine and salt that he fell. To preserve Rome from the tyrants it was necessary to maintain an armed force; to pay the force a tax was necessary;—the tax was imposed—and the multitude joined with the tyrants, and their cry was "Perish the traitor *who has made the gabelle!*" This was their only charge—this the only crime that their passions and their fury could cite against him.

The faults of Rienzi were sufficiently visible, and

I have not unsparingly shown them ; but we must judge men, not according as they approach perfection, but according as their good or bad qualities preponderate—their talents or their weakness—the benefits they effected—the evil they wrought. For a man who rose to so great a power, Rienzi's faults were singularly few—*crimes* he committed none. He is almost the only man who ever rose from the rank of a citizen to a power equal to that of monarchs without a single act of violence or treachery. When *in* power, he was sometimes vain, ostentatious, and imprudent ;—always an enthusiast—often a fanatic ; but his very faults had greatness of soul, and his very fanaticism at once supported his enthusiastic daring and proved his earnest honesty. It is evident that no heinous charge could be brought against him even by his enemies, for all the accusations to which he was subjected, when excommunicated, exiled, fallen, were for two offences which Petrarch rightly deemed the proofs of his virtue and his glory : first, for declaring Rome to be free ; secondly, for pretending that Romans had a right of choice in the election of the Roman Emperor.* Stern, just, and inflexible, as he was, when Tribune, his fault was never that of *wanton* cruelty. Petrarch's accusation against him, indeed, was that he was not determined enough—that he did not consummate the revolution by exterminating the Patrician tyrants. When Senator, he was, without sufficient ground, accused of avarice in the otherwise just and necessary execution of Montreal.† It was natural enough that his enemies and the vulgar should suppose that he executed a debtor to get rid of a debt ; but it was inexcusable in later, and

* The charge of heresy was dropped as without foundation.

† Gibbon, in mentioning the execution of Montreal, omits

wiser, and fairer writers to repeat so grave a calumny, without at least adding the obvious suggestion, that the avarice of Rienzi could have been much better gratified by sparing than by destroying the life of one of the richest subjects in Europe. Montreal, we may be quite sure, would have purchased his life at an unmeasurably higher price than the paltry sum lent to Rienzi by his brothers. And this is not even a probable hypothesis, but a certain fact, for we are expressly told, that Montreal, "knowing the Tribune was in want of money, offered Rienzi, that if he would let him go, he, Montreal, would furnish him not only with twenty thousand florins, (four times the amount of Rienzi's debt to him,) but with as many soldiers and as much money as he pleased." This offer Rienzi did not attend to. Would he have rejected it had avarice been his motive? And what culpable injustice, to mention the vague calumny without citing the practical contradiction! When Gibbon tells us also that "the *most* virtuous citizen of Rome," meaning Pandulfo, or Pandolficcio* di Guido, was sacrificed to his jealousy, he not only greatly exaggerates the expression bestowed upon Pandulfo, which is that of "*virtuoso assai*," and that, too, used to state that Montreal was more than suspected of conspiracy and treason to restore the Colonna. Matthew Villani records it as a common belief that such truly was the offence of the Provençal. The biographer of Rienzi gives additional evidence of the fact. Gibbon's knowledge of this time was superficial. Strangely enough, he represents Montreal as the head of the *first* Free Company that desolated Italy.

* Matthew Villani speaks of him as a wise and good citizen of great repute among the people—and this it seems he really was.

by a man who styles the robber Montreal “*eccellente uomo—di quale fama suono per tutta la Italia di virtude*”—(so good a moral critic was the writer!) but he also altogether waves all mention of the probabilities that are sufficiently apparent, of the scheming of Pandulfo to supplant Rienzi, and obtain the “*Sig-noria del Popolo*.”

Gibbon sneers at the military skill and courage of Rienzi. For the last there is no cause. His first attempts, his first rise, attested sufficiently his daring and brave spirit; in every danger he was present—never shrinking from a foe as long as he was supported by the People. He distinguished himself at Viterbo when in the camp of Alborno, and his end was that of a hero. For the first, it would be excusable enough if Rienzi—the eloquent and gifted student, called from the closet and the rostrum to assume the command of an army—should have been deficient in military science; yet, somehow or other, upon the whole, his arms prospered. He defeated the chivalry of Rome at her gates; and if he did not, after his victory, march to Marino, for which his biographer * and Gibbon blame him, the reason is sufficiently clear—“*Volea pecunia per soldati*”—he wanted money for the soldiers! On his return as Senator, it must be remembered that he had to besiege Palestrina, which was considered even by the ancient Romans almost impregnable by position; but during the few weeks he was in power, Palestrina yielded—all his open ene-

* In this the anonymous writer compares him gravely to Hannibal, who knew how to conquer, but not how to use his conquest.

mies were defeated—the tyrants expelled—Rome free ; and this without support from any party, Papal or Popular, or, as Gibbon well expresses it, “ suspected by the people—abandoned by the prince.”

On regarding what Rienzi did, we must look to his means—to the difficulties that surrounded him—to the scantiness of his resources. We see a man without rank, wealth, or friends, raising himself to the head of a popular government in the metropolis of the Church—in the City of the Empire. We see him reject any title save that of a popular magistrate—establish at one stroke a free constitution—a new code of law. We see him first expel, then subdue, the fiercest aristocracy in Europe—conquer the most stubborn banditti rule impartially the most turbulent people, embruted by the violence, and sunk in the corruption, of centuries. We see him restore trade—establish order—create civilisation as by a miracle—receive from crowned heads homage and congratulation—outwit, conciliate, or awe, the wiliest priesthood of the Papal Diplomacy—and raise his native city at once to sudden yet acknowledged eminence over every other state, its superior in arts, wealth and civilisation ;—we ask what errors we are to weigh in the opposite balance, and we find an unnecessary ostentation and a certain insolent sternness. But what are such offences—what the splendour of a banquet, or the ceremony of knighthood, or the few arrogant words, compared with the vices of almost every Prince who was his cotemporary ? This is the way to judge character—we must compare men with men, and not with ideals of what men should be. We look to the amazing benefits Rienzi conferred upon his

country. We ask his means, and see but his own abilities. His treasury becomes impoverished—his enemies revolt—the Church takes advantage of his weakness—he is excommunicated—the soldiers refuse to fight—the people refuse to assist—the Barons ravage the country—the ways are closed, the provisions are cut off from Rome.* A handful of banditti enter the city—Rienzi proposes to resist them—the people desert—he abdicates—Rapine, Famine, Massacre ensue—they who deserted regret, repent—yet he is still unassisted, alone—now an exile, now a prisoner, his own genius saves him from every peril, and restores him to greatness. He returns, the Pope's Legate refuses him arms—the People refuse him money. He re-establishes law and order, expels the tyrants, renounces his former faults†—is prudent, wary, provident—reigns a

* “Allora le strade furo chiuse, li massari de la terre non portavano grano, ogni die nasceva nuovo rumore.”—Vit. di Col. di Rienzi, lib. i. c. xxxvii.

† This, the second period of his power, has been represented as that of his principal faults—and he is evidently at this time no favourite with his biographer—but looking to what he *did*, we find amazing dexterity, prudence, and energy in the most difficult crisis, and none of his earlier faults. It is true, that he does not show the same brilliant extravagance which, I suspect, dazzled his contemporaries, more than his sounder qualities; but, we find that in a few weeks he had conquered all his powerful enemies—that his eloquence was as great as ever—his promptitude greater—his diligence indefatigable—his foresight unslumbering. “He alone carried on the affairs of Rome, but his officials were slothful and cold.” This too, tortured by a painful disease—already—though yet young—

few weeks—taxes the people, in support of the people, and is torn to pieces! One day of the rule that followed, is sufficient to vindicate his reign and avenge his memory—and for centuries afterwards whenever that wretched and degenerate populace dreamt of glory or sighed for justice, they recalled the bright vision of their own victim, and deplored the fate of Cola di Rienzi.

I have said that the moral of the Tribune's life, and of this fiction, is not the stale and unprofitable moral, that warns the ambition of an individual:—More vast, more solemn, and more useful—it addresses itself to nations. If I judge not erringly, it proclaims that to be great and free, a People must trust not to individuals but themselves—that there is no sudden leap from servitude to liberty—that it is to institutions, not to men, that they must look for reforms that last beyond the hour—that their own passions are the real despots they should subdue, their own reason the true regenerator of abuses. With a calm and a noble people, the indi-

broken and infirm. The only charges against him, as Senator, were the deaths of Montreal and Pandolfo di Guido—the imposition of the gabelle, and the renunciation of his former habits of rigid abstinence, for indulgence in wine and feasting. Of the first charges, the reader has already been enabled to form a judgment. To the last, alas! the reader must extend indulgence and for it he may find excuse. We must compassionate even more than condemn the man to whom excitement has become nature, and who resorts to the physical stimulus or the momentary lethe, when the mental exhilarations of hope, youth, and glory, begin to desert him.

vidual ambition of a citizen can never effect evil:—to be impatient of chains, is not to be worthy of freedom—to massacre a magistrate is not to ameliorate the laws.* The people write their own condemnation whenever they use characters of blood—and theirs alone the madness and the crime, if they crown a tyrant or butcher a victim.

* Rienzi was massacred, because the Romans had been in the habit of massacring whenever they were displeased. They had very shortly before stoned one magistrate, and torn to pieces another. By the same causes and the same career a People may be made to resemble the bravo whose hand wanders to his knife at the smallest affront, and if to-day he poinards the enemy who assaults him, to-morrow he strikes the friend who would restrain.

THE END.

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ERRATA TO VOL. II.

- Page 7, line 13, *for* for expelling *read* in expelling.
37, — 13, *for* curious *read* desirous.
43, — 8, *for* his *read* its.
46, — 4, *after* upon *insert* him.
272, — 15, *for* tyrant *read* tyrants.
320, — 22, *dele* and.

ERRATA TO VOL. III.

- In motto to Book vii. *for* lib. xi. *read* lib. ii.
Page 34, line 16, *dele* wielded.
61, — 16, *for* eight *read* seven.
72, — 21, *for* their poet *read* the poet.
133, — 9, *dele* purchased.

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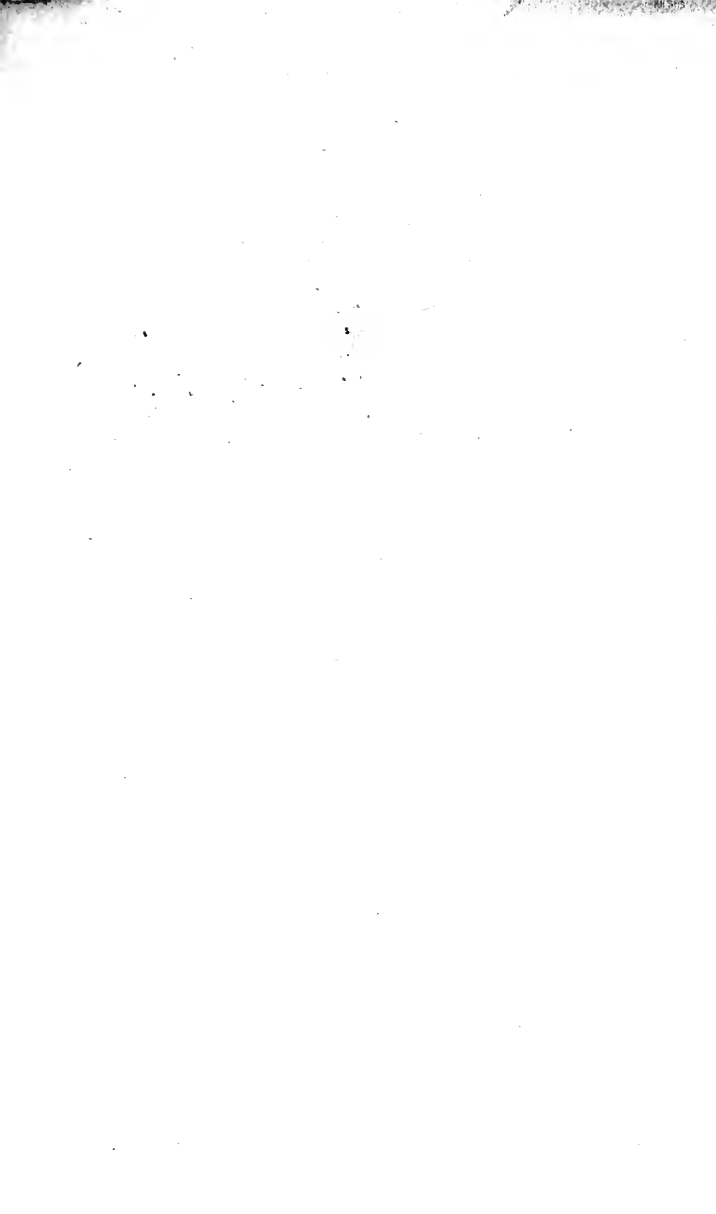
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